

**The gold seekers of '49; a personal narrative of the overland trail and adventures in California and Oregon from 1849 to 1854. By Kimball Webster, a New England forty-niner; with an introduction and biographical sketch by George Waldo Browne; illustrated by Frank Holland and others**

KIMBALL WEBSTER IN '49.

The Gold Seekers of '49 A PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF THE OVERLAND TRAIL AND ADVENTURES IN CALIFORNIA AND OREGON FROM 1849 TO 1854. BY KIMBALL WEBSTER A NEW ENGLAND FORTY-NINER *With an introudction and Biographical Sketch* BY GEORGE WALDO BROWNE *Illustrated* BY FRANK HOLLAND AND OTHERS MANCHESTER, N.H. STANDARD BOOK COMPANY 1917

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GEORGE W. BROWNE

7

**DEDICATION.**

TO MY FIVE DAUGHTERS, MRS. LIZZIE JANE MARTIN, MRS. ELIZA BALL LESLIE, MRS. JULIA ANNA ROBINSON, MRS. MARY NEWTON ABBOTT, ALL OF HUDSON, N.H., AND MRS. ELLA FRANCES WALCH, OF NASHUA; AND TO THE SWEET MEMORY OF THAT LOVED DECEASED DAUGHTER, LATINA RAY WEBSTER, WHO QUIETLY

PASSED TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE "GREAT DIVIDE," NOVEMBER 12, 1887, THIS  
NARRATIVE IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY THE

AUTHOR

KIMBALL WEBSTER

KIMBALL WEBSTER AT EIGHTY-FIVE.

9

**HON. KIMBALL WEBSTER.**

It is with keen regret and sorrow that we are called upon to record the going out of the life of the author of the following pages, who has died since work was begun upon the book. Mr. Webster was born in Pelham, N. H., November 2, 1828, the seventh child and third son of John and Hannah (Cummings) Webster. His education was acquired in the schools of his native town and Hudson, N. H. He grew up inured to the hard work upon a New England farm, besides working in granite quarries in his 19th and 20th years. In April, 1849, a little over six months before he was twenty-one, with others scattered all over the country, he caught the gold fever. Characteristic of his methodical ways, he kept a journal of his journey across the country and of his experiences as a miner in California and land surveyor in Oregon. His experiences in the Land of Gold is told in his own vivid language in the following pages, and forms one of the most interesting narratives of the days of the gold-seekers of the Pacific Slope.

In 1855, after leaving Oregon, he was employed as a surveyor and land examiner by the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad Company in the western part of Missouri. In 1858 he lived in Vinal Haven, Me., working in a granite quarry, but the following year took up his permanent residence in Hudson, N.H., where he lived the remainder of his long and useful life. Following his leading occupation as 10 surveyor and engineer, always active and capable in his duties as a citizen, Mr. Webster became a valuable and respected leader in public affairs, at one time or another holding all of the offices in the gift of his townsmen, while there were few important committees in

which he did not figure prominently. Possessing an observing mind, a good memory and a logical discernment and summing up of local and general matters, he early began to compile a history of his town, and after fifty years of painstaking work he had collected the data for one of the most comprehensive town histories ever written. He was then past eighty, and it was the pleasure of the undersigned to be associated with him in the preparation of the manuscript for the printer and its publication. During work upon that, his "journal" of the days of '49 were examined, and finally he consented to have it published.

He was a Justice of the Peace and had an extensive probate practice for nearly sixty years. He was a Mason and active in the order of Patrons of Husbandry. Mr. Webster retained his mental and physical powers, owing largely no doubt to a perfectly abstemious life, until within a short time of his decease, which occurred June 29, 1916, being 87 years, 7 months and 27 days of age. Noted for his sterling qualities, and having a wide acquaintance, he was mourned by a large circle of friends.

Mr. Webster married, January 29, 1857, Abiah, daughter of Seth and Deborah (Gage) Butler Cutter, of Pelham, N. H., who survives him, as well as five of their ten children, who have married and lived in Hudson.

G. W. B.

11

## CONTENTS.

Chapter Page  
Biographical Sketch of the Author 9  
Pioneers of California 15  
I. Tidings of a New Eldorado 17  
II. Across the Continent 23  
III. The Overland Trail 33  
IV. The Humboldt River Trail 83  
V. The Land of Gold 100  
VI. Adventures by Flood 122  
VII. Life in the Mines 137  
VIII. The Illusion of "Gold Lake" 156  
IX. Mining on the Yuba River 168  
X. With Compass and Chain in Oregon 182  
XI. Homeward Bound 227  
Story of the Discovery of Gold 237

13

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

Page Portrait of Kimball Webster in '49 Frontispiece Kimball Webster in His 85th year Opp.p.  
9 Placer Mining in '49. By Frank Holland (from an old drawing) 17 Overland Trail. By Frank  
Holland 33 Bay of San Francisco 49 The Golden Gate 65 San Francisco in 1849 81 Sutter's Mill  
97 Mining Scene 113 Sacramento City in 1850 129 Postoffice in '49 145 Custom House on the  
Plaza 161 Vigilantes in '49 177 Miners Starting for Home 193 Great Seal of California 209 Warship  
Portsmouth. By Frank Holland 225

14

## ERRATA

Line 16, insert George W. Houston, Joseph B. Gage, and Calvin S. Fifield 20

9, read Moore, not moon 39

9, read formed, not found 45

19, erase of, and insert on, after mountains 63

19, erase s at end of line, and insert r (Fort Bridger) 65

10, read service berries, not summer berries 74

Top, Chapter IV 83

18, spell Winnemucca 83

19, correct spelling of principal 96

15, read miners, not winers 101

18, read weighed, not wished 102

17, After promised, insert "to release to" 127

Top, also line 8, spell protractor 151

27 and 28, read the Pelham camp 166

2, after “The” erase following, and after morning insert before starting, 167

3, erase leaving and insert learning 177

8, at end of line add ship, “Columbia” 189

Top, erase “the” between “to” and “commence” 190

4 and 7, erase measured and insert meandered 207

7, erase compassman and insert campman 207

22 and 23, name of river, “Callapooya” 210

16, erase “have” and insert “had” 216

15

## **THE PIONEERS OF CALIFORNIA.**

The story of the pioneers of all times and all countries is one of great interest. In it is embodied the combined elements of adventure and patriotism; the certain forerunner of the coming greatness of the land quickened by the inspiring efforts of the newcomers, usually men of sterling qualities and unswerving purpose. The history of none of these adventurers is fraught with keener interest or more momentous results than that of the “Gold Seekers of '49.”

The story of the men who dared and did so much in the early days of the discovery of GOLD on the Pacific Slope has never been fully told. In the pages of this remarkable book we are given in plain straightforward language without any attempt at embellishment, by one who participated in them, the trying experiences that comprised the adventures and achievements of the hardy volunteers

forming the little army of gold seekers who crossed the plains immediately following the cry that awoke the land from ocean to ocean as no other word could have done.

With no Jason to lead them, no seer to prophesy success, no wizard to avert danger, these brave Argonauts pushed resolutely forward across a continent, traversing thousands of miles where the Greek heroes traveled hundreds, passing over long, weary stretches of pathless plains under beetling crags, along frowning chasms and over alkaline deserts, 16 where the barest sustenance of life was denied them, constantly menaced by the Arabs of prairie and mountain flitting hither and thither across their way, enduring sickness and privations sufficient to have discouraged a less determined body, comrade after comrade falling from the ranks, the ever-decreasing band still resolutely marching onward into the Land of Gold, to become the creators of a mighty commonwealth, the builders of states. Through the flood of circulating coin that their pickaxes unloosened was advanced the prosperity of a nation whose progress since has been the wonder of the world.

In the midst of all of this, and much more that a glance at the scenes cannot even suggest, Mr. Webster bore a prominent part as pioneer, miner, prospector, and surveyor of the new country. With over half a century intervening since that far-away day his vivid narrative comes to the few now living who participated in the scenes like a voice in a dream, while imparting to others the inner story of an era in our country's history that forms one of its most important chapters.

With nearly two-thirds of a century intervening since the days when the “gold fever” swept over the country, awakening steady-going New England as nothing else could have done, it is not strange we seldom meet now one of the veterans who answered the call and crossed a continent in a march as beset with dangers as many of a more warlike purpose, or rounded a world to pursue the phantom of fortune in a strange land. Very few of the Gold Seekers of '49 are living to enjoy the halcyon days of a long and useful life.

G. W. B.

A Drawing by Frank Holland from a contemporary painting. PLACER MINING SCENE IN '49.

## CHAPTER I.

### TIDINGS OF A NEW ELDORADO

Late in the autumn of 1848 some reports began to be received from the new Territory of California, which had then lately been acquired by the United States from Mexico, that large deposits of gold had been discovered there, and that the small resident population had almost forsaken their former avocation and had repaired to the rich mines where they were reaping a golden harvest, in many instances making large fortunes in a brief period.

These reports were at first almost entirely discredited by the people of the United States. Many believed it to be some cunning device of interested persons to decoy thither immigrants and thereby stimulate the growth of that sparsely populated territory.

During the early part of the winter of 1848-49 these reports were in a great measure corroborated and confirmed by official statements from government officers, who were stationed on the Pacific coast; and as early as January, 1849, vessels were fitting up in Boston, New York and other Atlantic ports, in a manner suited to convey passengers around Cape Horn to the New Eldorado, as it was then called.

The Pacific Mail Co. had at the time a line of steamers plying between New York and San Francisco, by the way of the Isthmus of Panama. These steamers made but one trip each way a month.

As soon as information of a reliable character was received in the Atlantic states regarding the mineral wealth of California, a large portion of the population became more or less excited, and many of an adventurous nature were at once determined to leave their homes and seek their fortunes on the western slope of the snowy mountains.

The query then arose, which was the cheapest, best and most expeditious route to reach San Francisco?

The long and tedious voyage of five or six months “around Cape Horn,” though perhaps the cheapest, was viewed by many as being almost beyond endurance.

The route by the Isthmus of Panama was attended by difficulties and dangers in crossing the Isthmus from Chagres to Panama, a distance of about fifty miles. This journey was performed in boats up the Chagres river, and thence by mules to Panama.

The journey by the latter route from New York to San Francisco had usually been performed in about thirty days and had usually been considered the better route.

So great was the rush to California by the way of the Isthmus in a short time, or as early as January, the tickets by that route were largely sold in advance for several trips, and thousands of passengers who had taken passage to Chagres were unable to get any conveyance<sup>19</sup> from there to California, and were compelled either to remain at Panama for weeks, and in many instances for months, or to return to New York or Boston.

This congested state of affairs rendered the Mail route extremely objectionable. While thousands were waiting for a passage at Panama, a large percentage of those waiting passengers were sick with the Panama fever or other tropical diseases, and many died from such diseases.

Numerous companies were organized during the winter with the intention of pursuing the land route across the extensive western plains and the Rocky Mountains, which was thought could be accomplished in from sixty to eighty days.

It will be remembered that all the country between the Missouri river and the Sacramento valley, which was called “The Great American Desert,” was almost an unbroken wilderness. No white people were then allowed to settle in that vast territory.

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As soon as I had sufficient reasons for believing California to be what it had been represented to be as a gold bearing country, I was determined to go myself; and after taking a prospective view of the difficulties and dangers incident to a protracted detention on the Isthmus and the tediousness of a long, monotonous journey via Cape Horn, I finally concluded to cross the country by land; believing it would be an interesting and romantic journey and one not entirely free from difficulties and hardships.

The Granite State and California Mining and Trading Company was organized in Boston in March, 1849, as a 20 joint stock company, with a constitution and by-laws extremely strict and precise.

The above company numbered twenty-nine members, principally hale, hearty, strong men, who were then about to leave their homes and friends to seek their fortunes in the newly discovered gold mines of California. The names of these twenty-nine men were as follows:

Charles Hodgdon, Grovensor Allen, Dr. A. Haynes, John Lyon, Lafayette Allen, Samuel W. Gage, Joseph D. Gage, Thomas J. True, Alfred Williams, Cuthbert C. Barkley, Kimball Webster, Erastus Woodbury, James M. Butler, Alden B. Nutting, Benjamin Ellenwood, James W. Stewart, Jonathan Haynes, Charles W. Childs, Robert Thom, Jacob Morris, Austin W. Pinney, J. P. Hoyt, George Carlton, J. P. Lewis, Dr. Amos Batchelder and Edward Moore.

Ten of these men were from the town of Pelham, N. H., as follows: Capt. Joseph B. Gage, Samuel W. Gage, Joseph D. Gage, Dr. Amos Batchelder, George Carlton, James M. Butler, Austin W. Pinney, Robert Thom, Benjamin Ellenwood and Jacob Morris.

The majority of them were natives of Pelham and had always resided there as neighbors. Several of the others were from Boston, and a few from other towns of New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Each member of the company was required to pay into the treasury the sum of three hundred dollars which, it was estimated, would be sufficient to furnish the necessary outfit and cover all traveling expenses.

It was the boast of the officers and many of the members that the Granite State Company would carry with 21 them and introduce into California New England principles. Pelham was my native town and although my home at that time was in Hudson I was acquainted with the larger number of the members from Pelham previous to the organization of the company. With the exception of the Pelham members they were all strangers to me. I was twenty years of age on November 2, 1848, five months before we started.

The officers at the time of starting were: George W. Houston, President; Joseph B. Gage, Vice President; Edward Moore, Secretary; Calvin S. Fifield, Treasurer; besides a Board of Directors. Another company similar to our own had been organized in Boston and numbered about forty members and was called the Mount Washington Company. These two companies mutually agreed to travel in company until they should reach California.

The president of the last mentioned company, Captain Thing, having several years previous traveled across the country from Independence, Missouri, to Fort Hall and Oregon, in company with some of the men of the American Fur Company, agreed to pilot the Granite State Company through to California for five dollars each.

Some two or three weeks previous to the time of the starting of the two companies, Captain Thing and Lafayette F. Allen of Boston were selected to go to Independence, Mo., in advance of the two companies, with sufficient funds to purchase mules and cattle in numbers adequate to supply the needs of the two companies in their embarkation on the broad plains at such time as they should arrive at the above mentioned place.

The necessary arrangements having all been matured 22 and the members having provided themselves with guns, pistols or revolvers, bowie-knives, and a plenty of powder, lead, caps, together with such other articles as they thought they might need on their long journey and after they should arrive at the "New Eldorado," we started on our long journey.

## CHAPTER II.

### ACROSS THE CONTINENT.

**TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 1849.**

We left Boston this morning at about 8 o'clock for Albany, by way of the Western Railroad.

After shaking hands and bidding such of our friends as had gathered at the station a good-bye, we seated ourselves in the cars, and as they began to move, the spectators that had gathered in and around the station sent up three most hearty cheers for the California adventurers; and they were very readily and heartily returned by us, while we were started on our way with railroad speed toward the land of gold.

We had a special car into which no intruder was allowed to trespass, and I believe a more jolly company of men has seldom been found. We arrived at Springfield, Mass., at about noon where we were fortunate in procuring a fine dinner, to which all did ample justice. After we had eaten we were soon on our way again.

We arrived at Greenbush, N. Y., before night, where we had some little trouble with the baggage master about procuring our trunks, which had been checked at Boston, as we had failed to procure the corresponding checks. However, after some little dispute he gave them up and we took the ferry boat for Albany on the opposite side of the Hudson.

24

It will be remembered that at that time no railroad bridge spanned the Hudson River. Everything had to be ferried over. At Albany we took our quarters at the Mansion House.

I will here mention that on the road today we fell in with George W. Houston, our president, who had started in advance of the company for the purpose, as it was said, of evading some officers

who were in pursuit of him for the object of detaining him until such time as he should be able to liquidate some obligations.

### **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18.**

We left Albany at 12:30 P.M. in an immigrant train for Buffalo. At Schenectady, about twenty miles from Albany, we were detained two or three hours, waiting for the passenger train to pass us. The fare by the immigrant train was considerably less but we soon discovered that it was a slow and tedious experience of travel, it being very slow. It was nearly night when we left Schenectady and proceeded slowly on our way. The night was cold and stormy—disagreeable in the extreme.

Some five or six inches of snow fell during the night, and there being no fires in the cars, or no place to lie down and nothing to eat, it was a very long, tedious night.

The night passed slowly away, and we arrived safely at Rochester at about 10 o'clock on the 19th; when, after refreshing ourselves with a good dinner, we crossed the Genesee River and took a view of the falls bearing the same name.

Near the middle of the channel is a high projecting 25 point of rocks, where the celebrated Sam Patch is said to have taken his last jump in presence of a large multitude of spectators; and it was said that he was never afterward seen. His motto was: "Some things may be done as well as others."

Rochester has very excellent water power, and can boast of some of the best flouring mills in the world.

Left Rochester at one o'clock, by the express train, for Buffalo, at which place we arrived at five o'clock P.M., and put up at Bennett's Temperance Hotel, where we found a very fine hotel and good accommodations.

### **FRIDAY, APRIL 20.**

There being no steamers going west from Buffalo today, we were compelled to await another day for a passage.

A railroad had been built and opened from Buffalo to Niagara Falls, a distance of twenty-two miles. The larger number of the company took this trip and went to the celebrated Falls, as a pleasant manner of passing the few hours that we were compelled to wait. We left Buffalo at two o'clock and rode twenty-two miles over a very rough and uneven railroad, and arrived at the Falls at about three o'clock.

On my arrival at the cataract, I descended the lofty flight of stone steps numbering 290—crossed the river in a yawl boat to the Canada side—a short distance below the Falls; went under the sheet of water at Table Rock, where I found a very damp atmosphere caused by the rising spray—so very damp that I soon became completely saturated.

26

I then went to the Suspension Bridge about two miles below the Falls, and there recrossed the river.

This bridge had been built the year previous, and was largely an experiment. It was a foot bridge suspended by wire cables and stood 230 feet above the water. It was about eight feet wide.

It seems useless for me to attempt a description of Niagara Falls. To be fully appreciated it must be seen. It is certainly one of Nature's wonderful curiosities.

### **SATURDAY, APRIL 21.**

We left Buffalo at 11 o'clock, A.M., in the elegant, first-class steamer Canada, for Detroit, Michigan, with pleasant weather and a smooth lake.

The weather continued fine until about five o'clock, when it commenced raining, and the lake became somewhat rough.

## **SUNDAY, APRIL 22.**

The weather today has been very fine.

At 7 o'clock we landed at Amherstbury, Canada, near the mouth of the Detroit River; and at nine, landed at the wharf at Detroit.

Detroit is situated on the west bank of the river bearing the same name, about twenty miles above Lake Erie. It rises gradually from the river and is a very pleasantly situated city. In the forenoon I attended the Congregational Church, where we heard an eloquent sermon by an able divine.

In the afternoon I visited Windsor, Canada, situated on the east side of Detroit River. This place contains 27 an old Jesuit church said to be more than one hundred and fifty years old, and built by early French settlers.

In the evening a few of the Pelham boys visited Gen. Lewis W. Cass at his elegant residence. We found Mr. Cass at home, to whom we introduced ourselves. He was a native of New Hampshire, and formerly had his home there. He received us with the greatest cordiality and respect, wishing us the greatest success in our enterprise, and expressing a desire to accompany us himself.

We remain aboard the Canada tonight.

## **MONDAY, APRIL 23.**

We left Detroit at 7:30 this morning by the Michigan Central Railroad for New Buffalo, a small village on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, near the line between the states of Michigan and Indiana. The country bordering on this road is principally very heavily timbered with oak, elm, hickory, ash, sycamore and other species. The houses are mostly small "log cabins."

The soil is fertile but somewhat low and moist, and is said to be well adapted to the propagation of the "shakes."

We arrived at New Buffalo at 7:30 in the evening, and we intended to have taken the steamer for Chicago immediately, but the harbor being so much exposed and the lake so very rough, it was impossible for the boat to make a landing at the wharf with safety. Consequently, we were compelled to await such time as the waters should become more calm. At that time the railroad had not been constructed around the south side of Lake Michigan into Chicago.

This was a newly constructed place and but a small 28 village at that; and as passengers usually embarked for Chicago almost immediately on their arrival here, the people had made no preparation to accommodate people over night. They had no accommodations to furnish lodgings or meals in so large numbers, and we were unable to obtain either. We were obliged to content ourselves in the cars during the night.

The night seemed long, cold and disagreeable, but at length it passed away.

## **TUESDAY, APRIL 24.**

The weather this morning was very cold and windy. The steamer from Chicago landed at the wharf at about 9 o'clock this morning, but, owing to the rough state of the lake, she had not lain at the wharf over two or three minutes before she parted her large hawser, and immediately left for Chicago, without her passengers.

At about ten o'clock in the evening, the lake having become comparatively smooth, the steamer Detroit came in. We soon after got aboard and were on our way for Chicago.

This was an old vessel and had a very ungentlemanly list of officers.

It was not until after a long parley with the steward and captain, that we were successful in obtaining any refreshments. Immediately after supper, I lay down and soon fell asleep, and, on awaking the next morning, I found our boat moored at the wharf in Chicago. The past two days had been our first really bitter experience. Much of the same as bad or worse was in store for us.

## **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25.**

Chicago at that time was a comparatively small city of about 25,000 inhabitants.

The Michigan and Illinois Canal from Lake Michigan at Chicago to the Illinois River at La Salle, which had been under construction for twelve years or more, had been finished the year previous, and was open for traffic.

We left Chicago at ten o'clock in the morning on a packet by the above mentioned canal for La Salle, a point situated at the head of navigation on the Illinois River.

The weather was fine and we found this to be a delightful mode of travel, but not very expeditious. The packet was drawn by mules or horses traveling on the tow-path.

The passengers had a good view of the broad Illinois prairies, as they passed leisurely through the country. A large percentage of those prairies were then unbroken and were the native home of the prairie hen. From Chicago westward the country is so nearly level that there are no locks in the canal for twenty-five miles.

At night we had the pleasure of seeing a burning prairie for the first time.

## **THURSDAY, APRIL 26.**

Owing to a leakage in the canal the packet ran aground about two o'clock this morning, where we were detained four hours—until six. We arrived at La Salle about two o'clock in the afternoon.

The canal passes along down a valley one mile or more broad, with bluffs on each side. This valley has the appearance of having been, at some remote period of the 30 past, the bed of a large river, and is thought by many to have once been the outlet and drainage of the Great Lakes, whose waters now form the great cataract of Niagara. I went out with my gun about one mile west of the city,



where I found prairie chickens to be very numerous on the prairie. They are as large or larger than our New England partridge, which they very much resemble.

We left La Salle at 9 o'clock in the evening by the steamer Princeton for St. Louis, by way of the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers.

#### **FRIDAY, APRIL 27.**

The weather is fine today. The Illinois River is a stream about one-half mile wide, with low, timbered bottom lands on each side, which at this time are considerably inundated, the river being quite high.

The scenery along the river presents a very dreary appearance at this time. It is neither beautiful nor grand. We saw a few wild turkeys along near the shore, which to us was something new.

#### **SATURDAY, APRIL 28.**

At ten o'clock we entered the Mississippi River, and at eleven, passed the junction of the Missouri with the Mississippi.

The river at this point is nearly two miles in width, and has a current of about four miles an hour.

The upper Mississippi is a deep, clear stream, while the Missouri has many shoals and sand bars, and whose 31 waters are always muddy, so very muddy that they color the Mississippi, from the junction to the Gulf of Mexico.

At one o'clock we arrived at St. Louis.

This flourishing city is situated on the west bank of the Mississippi, and, owing to its commanding position, will probably ever maintain a leading position among the great cities of the West.

The streets, at this time, are quite muddy and filthy, but they are of good width.

The population appears to be made up—as seems to us New Englanders—of a heterogeneous collection of almost every nation and tongue.

Tonight we engage passage to Independence, Missouri, and go aboard the steamer Bay State, which is to leave here tomorrow morning for St. Joseph, Mo.

### **SUNDAY, APRIL 29.**

We left St. Louis at ten o'clock and proceeded up the river. At twelve we entered the turbid waters of the Missouri.

The Bay State is a good vessel, but is very much crowded with Californians.

On her last voyage up the river she is said to have lost quite a large number of her passengers by cholera, which at present is quite prevalent on the western rivers.

At 4 o'clock we pass the beautiful city of St. Charles, situated on the north bank of the river.

The bottom lands along the river are low and subject to overflow; consequently the settlements in sight of the river are not very numerous, a few log cabins being seen on the banks.

32

The channel of the river is very much obstructed by snags and sand bars and is constantly changing, which renders the navigation of the Missouri extremely difficult and dangerous.

### **MONDAY, APRIL 30.**

We made about ninety miles during the day yesterday, but moved slowly during the night.

Early this morning we passed the village of Hermon, noted for its extensive wine distilleries.

A little later we passed Portland, situated on the north side of the river. At three we touched at

Jefferson City, situated on the right bank of the Missouri River, 160 miles from St. Louis. This is the capital of Missouri, and is very pleasantly located on a high bank.

## **TUESDAY, MAY 1.**

At 12 o'clock we passed Glasgow; at 5, Brunswick; and at 7, Miami, all of which are apparently pleasant and thriving little villages.

The banks of the river are much higher than they are lower down, and consequently, we see more settlements.

## **WEDNESDAY, MAY 2.**

We saw a few small villages on the banks of the river.

At six o'clock P. M. we passed Lexington City, some forty or fifty miles below Independence, our destination.

## **THURSDAY, MAY 3.**

At two o'clock this morning we arrived at Independence Landing, four miles from Independence.

From a Painting by Frank Holland. THE OVERLAND TRAIL TO CALIFORNIA. "Westward the course of Empire takes its way."

33

## **CHAPTER III.**

### **THE OVERLAND TRAIL.**

This is the place where we are to be initiated into the beauties of camp life; and to fit out and start with our mule trains for California.

At 4 P.M. we had our tents pitched and, as we believed, were perfectly well prepared for the first night in camp, and partaking of a little supper—the first of our own cooking—we lay down, all seeming anxious to try our new manner of living.

We rested very comfortably for a time, but at length it began to rain quite rapidly, and we felt much pleased to find our tents so well adapted to shed water and protect us from a heavy shower.

Our joy, however, was soon after turned to disgust and chagrin when we felt the water between us and the ground, and on rising, we found our under blankets thoroughly drenched with water. Many of us were thoroughly wet to the skin.

This first mishap of the kind to happen must be attributed to our own innocent ignorance, as our tents were set on a slight declivity, and the necessity of trenching them on the upper sides to turn the water away, did not occur to us. However, we learned this part of camp life in such a manner as to never be forgotten.

It was learned in the same manner as we shall hereafter, probably, learn many other new things before our 34 journey is ended. A few of our party begin to believe that they have already seen almost enough of camp life to satisfy them.

The company held the monthly meeting today for the election of officers, for the month ensuing, at which Joseph B. Gage was elected president, his term of office to extend to June first. He seemed to feel very much pleased with his new position.

The rain descended in torrents today.

In the afternoon, nine of us took our saddles, a tent and some provisions and went about three miles in a southerly direction, where a large number of our mules were herded, for the purpose of trying our hand at breaking them.

These mules had been purchased by the agents of the two companies and were being kept by Mr. Sloan. We set our tent at the place of herding and made an ineffectual effort to kindle a fire; and after several like attempts, we were compelled to give it up and do without a fire, and put up with some raw ham and hard bread for our supper; after which we retired for a second night's lodging in the tent.

### **SATURDAY, MAY 5.**

The rain ceased last night, and it was fair and pleasant this morning. Five of our mules had broken out of their enclosure and gone astray. Some two or three of our party went in search of them, but returned tonight without success.

We tried our skill today at breaking mules, but having 35 heretofore had no experience or acquaintance with the long-eared animals, we found it to be a more difficult task than we had supposed it to be, and consequently did not make much progress.

They were young mules which had never been halter-broken, and were almost as wild as the deer on the prairie. A wild, unbroken mule is the most desperate animal that I have ever seen.

I will pass over the time intervening between now and May 26, or about three weeks, with the mention of a few incidents that occurred during our stay at Independence, and giving a slight description of the country surrounding this place.

This being one of the principal fitting-out places for California, it was crowded with immigrants from all parts of the United States. Hundreds of ox-teams and mule-teams were leaving here daily for California, besides many pack-trains, coaches and almost every kind of team or vehicle.

The Asiatic cholera was raging among the immigrants to a large extent.

Many were daily falling victims to this dreaded scourge, while many others were becoming disheartened and were turning back to their homes. Everything here was bustle and wild confusion.

Much of the weather was rainy and disagreeable, with occasionally one of the most terrific thunder showers that I ever witnessed.

We tried in vain to break our mules by putting large packs of sand on their backs and leading them about, but it availed very little, as the second trial was as bad as the first; and they were nearly as wild and vicious when we started on our journey as they were when they were first packed.

Several of our company were sick with the cholera, while a number of the Mount Washington company died with the same dread disease. These adverse circumstances detained us somewhat longer than we wished, and much longer than it was for our interest to remain; but as it seemed unavoidable, we were compelled to content ourselves as best we could. But we were looking for better days. Joseph B. Gage continued to fill the office of president.

The surrounding country is very beautiful with a rich, productive soil, much of it being a high, rolling prairie.

Timber is somewhat scarce, but it is of a superior quality.

There are some small plantations, principally cultivated by colored people, who in almost all cases appear to be well satisfied with their condition in life.

On May 26th, we had moved out about twenty miles from Independence and were prepared for a start. Independence is but a short distance from where Kansas City now stands. (Distance to here, 20 miles.)

## **SATURDAY, MAY 26.**

We commenced packing our mules early in the morning, but owing to their wild and unbroken state, and being unacquainted with packing, were not prepared to start until five o'clock in the evening, when we left our old camp-ground and travelled three miles and again camped. (Distance, 3 miles.)

This appeared like a very tedious way to get to California, a distance of more than 2,000 miles.

**SUNDAY, MAY 27.**

We commenced packing again this morning and were prepared to start at about noon. This is quite an improvement in point of time over yesterday.

It took as many men to pack a mule as could stand around it, and we were obliged to choke many of them, before we could get the saddle upon their backs.

They would kick, bite and strike with their fore feet, making it very dangerous to go about them. Several of our company were quite badly disabled by working with them, so that they were unable to assist in packing.

We started about noon and traveled about eight miles, over a high, rolling prairie, and camped. Today we crossed the western boundary of Missouri and entered the Indian Territory. (Distance, 8 miles.)

**MONDAY, MAY 28.**

This morning we started at 9 o'clock and traveled eighteen miles over a rolling prairie country, and camped near a small Indian village. Very little timber of any kind is found in this section, but we find plenty of grass and water.

The soil is deep and of first-rate quality; and at no distant day this must become one of the richest and most productive agricultural sections of the country. (Distance, 18 miles.)

**TUESDAY, MAY 29.**

Leave camp at 10 o'clock and travel twelve miles across a prairie and camp in a very pleasant place, where we find plenty of good grass and water, and also a scanty supply of wood.

We saw about a dozen wild horses; but it was impossible to approach near them. Very little game is seen near the road. (Distance, 12 miles.)

### **WEDNESDAY, MAY 30.**

Owing to some of our horses and mules straying away last night and taking the road toward Missouri, we remained encamped today. The horses, mules and cattle belonging to the two companies number more than three hundred. It was necessary to guard them nights, and each member was obliged to take his turn on guard, regularly, a part of the night, once in two or three nights.

The cattle that we were driving were designed to furnish us with our principal dependence for provisions during our long journey. They were mostly young cattle and not very large. When we were in need of some provisions we would have one killed and dressed, and the meat was divided among the different messes.

We were fortunate enough to recover our mules and horses before night.

I went across about three miles to an Indian village. They have very comfortable log cabins, and were at work turning up the prairie with the plow; and apparently some of them have very good farms, and appear to be partially civilized, and seem to be in a fair way to give up their former nomadic way of life in exchange for civilization, and gain their livelihood by tilling the soil, instead of pursuing the chase. This, probably, is one of the most civilized tribes, and the great majority of our wild Indians must be expected to cling to their ancient manners and customs for many years in the future.

### **THURSDAY, MAY 31.**



The weather is fair and pleasant.

Edward Moon, Esq., secretary of our company, being very much out of health, turned back and left the company for Boston.

This is the second one of our company who has given up going to California and returned to his home.

Many are turning back with their teams, having become discouraged in anticipation of the long and tedious journey before them; large numbers are dying daily of cholera and other fatal diseases.

Leave camp at one o'clock and travel about four miles, where we cross a small river running south; and later, we cross a low, wet, swampy prairie about one and one-half miles in width, after which we travel six miles and camp.

Land today principally prairie, with some cottonwood timber along the streams. Soil excellent. (Distance traveled, 12 miles.)

### **FRIDAY, JUNE 1.**

A beautiful morning. We leave camp at 9 o'clock this morning and travel about twenty miles, over a rolling 40 prairie, without wood or water. Camp in the afternoon about one-half miles west of the road.

We have lost four or five of our cattle, they having left the herd and strayed away. The mules are now becoming very tame and docile, but many of them have very sore backs.

Some of our mules are packed with more than two hundred pounds, which is much too heavy for so young animals. (Distance today, 20 miles.)

### **SATURDAY, JUNE 2.**

We delayed starting until 2 o'clock, for the reason that two of the Mount Washington men that are traveling with us were taken with the cholera during last night. We leave them with Dr. A. Haynes with assistants and travel twelve miles and camp on the north bend of a small stream, about fifteen miles from the Kansas River.

One of the cholera patients died at 5 o'clock this evening. The other seems some better and appears to be in a fair way to recover.

### **SUNDAY, JUNE 3.**

Fair and warm. Thermometer 86 degrees in the shade. The last of the two cholera patients died this morning at 9 o'clock. They both died at the camp where we left them, twelve miles east.

We remain here today where we find plenty of good wood, water and grass. The men of both companies are now in good health.

The two men that died of the cholera were large, heavy, 41 strong men in good health, and were taking their turn at driving cattle on Friday. They were stricken with cholera on Friday night. One of the men died Saturday afternoon, and the other died Sunday morning at 9 o'clock. They were buried on the wild prairie. There are hundreds of the immigrants dying constantly—more or less every day.

### **MONDAY, JUNE 4.**

Leave camp at 10 o'clock for the Kansas River. We cross two or three small streams and pass some Indian settlements, and arrive at the Kaw River ferry in season to cross our horses and mules and a part of our baggage before night.

The ferry-boat is made from hewn planks framed together, bearing a very strong resemblance to a raft.

The river is about 650 feet in width, with a rapid and muddy current. This is one of the three or four streams that contribute to render the waters of the Missouri so very muddy.

On the right bank of the river is situated a small Indian village, known as Uniontown, which, together with the Indian population, contains a few white men who have taken Indian women for their wives.

Two or three of the Mount Washington company are seriously attacked with cholera, but they recovered during the night. (Distance, 15 miles.)

## **TUESDAY, JUNE 5.**

It was quite late in the afternoon before we had succeeded in getting all of our mules, horses, cattle and 42 baggage over the river, consequently we did not move our camp today.

The Pottawatomie tribe of Indians that inhabit this section of the country is quite numerous and is in a partial state of civilization. They are cultivating the soil to considerable extent and raise wheat, corn and potatoes in moderate quantities. We purchased of them some flour and two or three Indian ponies.

One or two of our company are talking some of leaving our company and joining some other party, but they concluded to continue with us.

## **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6.**

We leave camp at 12 o'clock and travel 18 miles. We passed a Catholic mission erected for the purpose of Christianizing the Indian tribes and converting them to the Catholic religion. Indian settlements are quite numerous here. Rattlesnakes are seen in large numbers.

We camped in the evening, after which a very violent shower came up.

The wind blew so violently that all of our tents were leveled to the earth over our heads, which was not very agreeable. However, we are compelled to make the best of all such misfortunes, and are becoming more accustomed to the endurance of hardships than at first. (Distance, 18 miles.)

#### **THURSDAY, JUNE 7.**

We start at 9 o'clock this morning and after traveling four miles, cross the Little Vermillion River.

43

We halt for dinner at 10 o'clock, and camp at 6 o'clock. The country through which we are traveling is very beautiful, it being a high, rolling prairie covered with a fine growth of grass, and watered by numerous cool springs of good water, with some small streams. (Distance, 16 miles.)

#### **FRIDAY, JUNE 8.**

Strike camp at 8 o'clock, travel until noon, when we unpack our mules and remain until 2 o'clock. Camp at 6 in the evening.

The road is dry and hard and almost as good as a turnpike.

The ox-teams make as good time as our mule train. (Distance traveled, 20 miles.)

#### **SATURDAY, JUNE 9.**

Leave camp at 8:30, and soon after cross the Big Vermillion River, which is a stream of considerable size, with a very rapid current.

Halt for dinner at noon and camp at night without wood. The water is considerably impregnated with alkali, so very strong that it feels slippery.

There is said to be much of this kind of water on the plains. It is destructive to health and even life, both to man and animals. (Distance, 20 miles.)

## SUNDAY, JUNE 10.

Break camp before breakfast and travel twelve miles, where we find an abundance of wood and good water.

44

Some returning Californians dined with us today, having traveled about 150 miles beyond this point, when they became discouraged and began to retrace their footsteps.

The prospects of reaching California certainly look somewhat discouraging at the present time.

The great bulk of the immigration, which is very large, is in advance of us. That very much dreaded scourge, the Asiatic cholera, is making such sad havoc among the Californians that almost every camp-ground is converted into a burial-ground, and at many places twelve or fifteen graves may be seen in a row.

Almost every traveler that we meet, who has ever been west of the Rocky Mountains, gives it as his opinion that there is not grass enough in that region of country to sustain one-half of the stock that is now on the California trail; and they are of the opinion that the present immigration cannot reach California this season.

Much trouble is also anticipated by many from some of the western tribes of Indians, who are said to be hostile to the whites. The Mormons who settled near the California trail, in the Great Lake valley, in 1847, are also much feared by a large number of those from Missouri.

All these circumstances and conditions combined are of sufficient weight to frighten many and cause them to banish the bright, golden visions which allured them from their homes, with the bright anticipations of soon becoming wealthy.

The principal anxiety that seems to fill the minds of such at the present time is to reach, as soon as possible, their former homes; and consequently, while the great 45 majority are moving west, a large number are traveling east.

To meet so many who have been farther westward on the trail, and who have turned backward, and are now seeking their former homes, has its influence upon a large number that would otherwise proceed and causes them to also reverse their course.

I have, myself, heard all these discouragements many times rehearsed, and weighed the matter, and have found conclusions as follows:

I started for California anticipating that we should meet many hardships, privations and dangers on our long journey, and, as yet, we have experienced nothing of a nature any more severe than we had reason to expect; and as for what we may find ahead of us we know but little of. I am fully determined to proceed as far in the direction of California as it is possible for me to go, and not to return until I have seen the place I set out to reach.

It seems to be a very curious fact that the immigrants from the state of Missouri—which by the way, were more numerous than from any other one state—seem to suffer more from the cholera than almost all the other immigration combined.

I know of no good reason why this should be so. They have had their homes on the frontier and, consequently, have been subjected to more exposure and hardships than any other class now on the California trail. (Distance traveled, 12 miles.)

46

## **MONDAY, JUNE 11.**

The first experience worthy of note this morning was a very heavy shower. This lasted two hours and was accompanied with a most terrific gale, which very soon levelled every tent in our camp,

leaving us nothing under which we could shelter ourselves. Consequently, we were all most thoroughly drenched.

Start in the afternoon and travel fifteen miles over a smooth prairie, and camp. (Distance, 15 miles.)

## **TUESDAY, JUNE 12.**

Weather very fine. Leave camp at 9 o'clock, and travel eight miles and camp until three, when we again move on nine miles farther, and camp for the night. (Distance traveled, 17 miles.)

## **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13.**

A shower with a heavy wind occurred at about midnight.

Our tents withstood the gale, but the rain was driven through in such large quantities as to drench us thoroughly.

At about 2 o'clock another shower occurred with a wind much stronger and more severe than the first, which levelled all our tents to the ground, notwithstanding the exertions of us all to keep them standing; and we were again left without a shelter, and compelled to pass the balance of the night as best we could—some standing in the open air with their backs to the storm, while others 47 were lying under their prostrate tents with water all around them two or three inches deep.

These showers are accompanied with very violent electrical displays and very heavy thunder. They are the most violent and terrifying of anything of the kind I have ever witnessed.

About daylight we managed to get fires started, and before noon dried ourselves and our camp equipage almost completely.

We started at noon and traveled eighteen miles. The land through which we passed is apparently very fertile, but is almost destitute of timber of any kind. Camp on a small stream of clear, pure water.

#### **THURSDAY, JUNE 14.**

Leave camp at seven in the morning and travel until eleven o'clock. We take dinner on the bank of the Big Blue River—a fork of the Kansas. We start again at two o'clock and camp at six on the Big Blue. (Distance, 25 miles.)

#### **FRIDAY, JUNE 15.**

Weather fair and cool. Travel up the Blue River to-day. This is a most beautiful stream; has a rich and fertile soil, with considerable good timber. (Distance, 25 miles.)

#### **SATURDAY, JUNE 16.**

Decamp at eight o'clock and travel ten miles to the point where the trail leaves the Blue River. We dine here.

#### **BAY OF SAN FRANCISCO.**

48

The road from this place to the Platte River is through prairie country destitute of wood. We travel fifteen miles in the afternoon and camp on the prairie, without wood, and with quite poor water.

#### **SUNDAY, JUNE 17.**

Travel twelve miles in the forenoon to the Platte, or Nebraska River. In the afternoon we go up the river eight miles and camp near Fort Kearney, at the head of Grand Island. This island is 52 miles in length and appears to be well timbered.

The Platte is a large river, being from one to two miles wide, and has a very rapid current. Its waters are so very muddy that after a bucketful has settled, an inch of mud, or sediment will appear at the bottom. It has a bed of sand which is constantly in motion. (Distance traveled, 20 miles.)



## **MONDAY, JUNE 18.**

We remain here today.

The weather is fair and warm. Thermometer 86 degrees in the shade. Grass is not very abundant.

We repair our pack-saddles and other equipage which has become considerably out of repair. The backs and shoulders of many of our mules have become very sore and in a serious condition, many of them having lost large patches of skin, and the prospect, at present, seems to be that few of them will survive to reach California the present season.

We have made an inspection of our packs today in view of trying to make them lighter, if possible, but could discover very little in them that the members were willing to discard.

We have, for one thing, a patent "filter," the weight of which is about 30 pounds, which has been of no use to us, and the prospect now is that it will never be of any benefit whatever. We have some iron spades that probably will be of no benefit to any one.

We have also some large, heavy picks which we have brought all the way from Boston, and also shovels. These may be useful in the mines, but it does not seem to be feasible to pack them 2000 miles on the sore backs of mules.

There are, however, such a large number in the company that are so bitterly opposed to leaving any such article that they will defeat any such measure proposed; and even call all such foolish who believe it would be wise to lighten the loads of our poor mules in such a manner.

## **TUESDAY, JUNE 19.**

Weather fair and very windy.

Remain here today. I visit Fort Kearney, which is about one and one-half miles distant from our camp.

The fort and other buildings are constructed of adobe, or sun-burned bricks, with one exception. The fort was established about two years since.

A large number of immigrants are encamped about the fort, at this time, and also a company of United States cavalry. It is said at Fort Kearney that the wagons passed here already this season, en route for California, 50 number 5,400, and also three pack trains. This point is about 350 miles from Independence, Mo.

### **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20.**

We packed in the afternoon and after traveling four miles, we encountered a very fierce shower, which thoroughly drenched every one of us. A little later another shower was encountered, which was much more severe than the first, and which was accompanied with some hail and a terrific wind.

Camp at the first good camping place after the showers. Blankets and all clothes thoroughly wet and no opportunity for drying them. It is certainly uncomfortable lodgings.

Since leaving Independence, until the last two or three days, my health has not been very good. (Distance, 10 miles.

### **THURSDAY, JUNE 21.**

Travel nine miles in the forenoon and six in the afternoon. Our course is up the Platte River, the valley of which is nearly level and is several miles wide on either side. We camp tonight where there is no wood on the mainland, and we waded a branch of the river about twenty rods to an island to procure it. The water is not deep, but the current is quite rapid. There are numerous islands in the river.

### **FRIDAY, JUNE 22.**

Travel 12 miles in the forenoon, halt two hours and dine. Travel eight miles in the afternoon and camp. All in good health.

51

**SATURDAY, JUNE 23.**

Travel up the River Platte today 20 miles, and camp without wood, but find plenty of "Buffalo chips," which, if dry, are a very good substitute for fuel.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 24.**

Weather fair and warm. Thermometer stands at 95 degrees, at noon, in the shade.

I traveled south, back from the river, about four miles to the bluffs, today. Owing to the very clear, transparent atmosphere, no one who was not acquainted with it could believe the distance was more than one mile at most. I did not believe it when I left camp, after having been told by those who had traveled the distance and back.

These bluffs are a succession of sand hills, rising abruptly from the level plain, along the Platte on both sides, and extend back from the river a long distance.

Antelopes are very plentiful, but are not easily killed on the level prairie. There is little timber or wood here. The soil is sandy, but produces a very good grass.

**MONDAY, JUNE 25.**

Broke camp at 5 o'clock in the morning and traveled eight miles, where we halted until two in the afternoon. Travel three and one-half hours in the afternoon and camp on the bank of the river, where we found a good supply of wood. Mosquitoes are more plentiful here than I have ever seen before. I would judge there are more than forty bushels of these pests to the acre, and they are of a very large breed. (Distance, 20 miles.)

52

## **TUESDAY, JUNE 26.**

Started at 5 o'clock this morning. We had traveled about ten miles, when the startling cry of "Buffalo ahead" was heard from those in advance.

This was the first buffalo herd seen by our company, and every one was anxious to gratify his curiosity by a sight of a real live American bison. On looking ahead about two miles, and not far from the immigrant trail, a herd of about one hundred buffaloes could be seen, quietly grazing.

A number of the company that could be spared from the train, immediately left the train and gave chase to the herd. The buffaloes on seeing their approach, immediately started toward the sand hills, and soon disappeared from sight. The men who were in pursuit followed them, and we soon after camped on the bank of the River Platte.

Soon after we had unpacked the mules, we saw four large buffaloes emerging from the brush, not more than 100 rods distant from our camp. Our horses were all unsaddled, and before we could catch and saddle them, the large animals were a long distance from us.

One of our men, Mr. Hodgdon, soon came in and stated that he had shot and killed a buffalo, about four miles distant from our camp, in the sand hills. After dinner, a party of four or five with two extra mules, went out to dress the slaughtered bison, and to bring the meat into our camp; and the balance of the company packed up the camp and started. During the afternoon, we killed a buffalo calf, four or five weeks old.

**53**

We ate buffalo meat for supper, cooked with "Buffalo chips." The meat is very coarse grained and of a dark color, and is very good, but in my estimation, is much inferior to good beefsteak. They are said not to be so good at this season of the year as they will be later, when they will be more fleshy. (Distance, 18 miles.)

## **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27.**

We started at 8 o'clock and traveled four miles in the forenoon. In the afternoon we go up the river to the South Platte.

I went up the river about three miles for some wood. Plenty of buffalo. (Distance, 17 miles.)

#### **THURSDAY, JUNE 28.**

Fair weather. Packed in the morning and prepared to ford the south fork of the Platte River.

The stream is about three-fourths of a mile in width and from one foot to three feet deep. The current is rapid and water very muddy. From its appearance, any one might suppose the stream was 20 feet deep.

I crossed and recrossed it on horseback three times. We had no very bad luck in crossing. Some of our packs became wet and we unpacked on the west side of the stream and dried them. We started at one o'clock and traveled 12 miles in the afternoon and camped without wood, but found plenty of good, dry "Buffalo chips." (Distance, 13 miles.)

54

#### **FRIDAY, JUNE 29.**

Start at 6.30 o'clock and finding neither wood nor water, we traveled seven hours, when we halt and make a search for water, and find a spring about one mile from camp.

This was good fortune. (Distance, 20 miles.)

#### **SATURDAY, JUNE 30.**

Weather warm and dry. Travel ten miles in the forenoon and eight in the afternoon. One of our company killed a buffalo this afternoon, and after we had camped, Joseph B. Gage, with two or three others, with mules, went back to bring in the meat; but before they had arrived at the place

where it was slain, they saw a band of Indians riding toward them, and they became frightened and returned to camp with all possible speed.

The next morning, a party of Sioux Indians came into our camp, and desired the doctor should give them some medicine, stating that their camp was on the opposite side of the Platte, and that the smallpox was raging among them.

They were perfectly friendly and said they had no intention of frightening our men away from the buffalo meat, but that they wished to talk with them and get some medicine; and also stated that they made all the friendly signs that they could think of to have them stop. The doctor supplied them with medicine and they left our camp. (Distance, 18 miles.)

55

#### **SUNDAY, JULY 1.**

We did not move camp today.

The land is not so level here as it is on the Lower Platte. Soil sandy; wood scarce; weather fair and dry.

#### **MONDAY, JULY 2.**

We started in the morning and soon passed through Ash Hollow, so-called. It derives its name from large quantities of red ash timber found here.

We dine at the foot of Castle Bluffs. These bluffs of sandstone rise abruptly several hundred feet, and having been exposed to the weather for many thousand years, have been transformed into shapes very much resembling ancient castles, hence the name. Camp on the Platte.

The road today has been very sandy. (Distance, 23 miles.

#### **TUESDAY, JULY 3.**

Break camp at half past six in the morning and travel four hours in the forenoon and eleven miles in the afternoon. Found the road sandy. Camp on the bank of the North Platte. (Distance, 25 miles.)

#### **WEDNESDAY, JULY 4.**

The Fourth of July will remind an American of his home wherever he may be or however far he may be separated from it. Early in the morning we fired several rounds, and made as much noise as possible in honor of the day of Independence. We started in the morning and soon passed an encampment where we had the 56 pleasure of beholding the “Star Spangled Banner” floating in the cool breeze. We traveled a few miles farther and passed another camp with two large American flags waving above it.

We halted at noon within sight of Court House Rock. This rock is several hundred feet in length and at a distance bears a strong resemblance to a large building with a cupola. It is said to be about 12 miles from the road, but to measure the distance with the eye, a person would judge it to be not more than one mile distant. The name of J. J. Astor, with the date 1798, is said to have been carved there, and that it may still be seen. Mr. Astor was one of the American fur traders to cross the continent.

We camp seven miles south of Chimney Rock. This rock rises about 255 feet and in form very much resembles a chimney. Standing as it does on a level plain, it can be seen 25 or 30 miles away. Its material is sandstone and may easily be worked or cut. (Distance, 20 miles.)

#### **THURSDAY, JULY 5.**

Weather pleasant. Traveled 18 miles up the Platte and camped. Grass is quite scarce here.

#### **FRIDAY, JULY 6.**

We passed “Scott's Bluffs” in the forenoon which present a very peculiar appearance. We found plenty of wood at noon—the first we have had for four days.

Camp at a fine spring, where we also find an abundance of fuel but a scarcity of grass. In the afternoon 57 we have a view of “Laramie Peak,” distant more than 50 miles west. Camp at night on Horse Creek, where we find good grass and water. (Distance, 25 miles.)

### **SATURDAY, JULY 7.**

Traveled 20 miles, principally over a barren country, and camped.

### **SUNDAY, JULY 8.**

Weather fair with a high wind.

Start in the morning and after traveling three hours we reach Laramie River, which we ford with no other difficulty than to have some of our packs considerably wet. This stream, although small, is very rapid and has a gravelly bottom with clear water.

We soon after passed Fort Laramie and camp two miles above the fort on Laramie River. By recrossing the river we have good grass for our horses, mules and cattle. (Distance, 15 miles.)

### **MONDAY, JULY 9.**

Remained here today.

Before leaving Boston we had light, strong trunks manufactured—two for each pack mule—in which to pack our clothing, provisions, etc. They were made as portable as was possible to insure sufficient strength. We now, after packing them about 700 miles, get a vote of the company to break them up and make bags from the leather coverings. This measure some of us have believed to be a wise plan for a month past, but those who 58 first favored the plan were laughed at by the majority. We have been packing thirty pounds of dead weight to each mule which can be dispensed with. The first thought of packing these trunks—two to each mule—to California, was a sad oversight by Captain Thing, who suggested them.



## **TUESDAY, JULY 10.**

Weather fair and warm; thermometer 98 degrees in the shade. Remained here today. In the evening I went down to the fort. The outside wall is built of adobe, or sun-burnt bricks, and encloses about one-half acre. The buildings are within the enclosure. The fort was established several years since by the American Fur Company for the purpose of trading with the Indians, and was sold a short time since by that company to the United States Government, and is now occupied by Colonel Sanderson with a regiment of United States Cavalry. He is now engaged in building a mill, house, barracks, etc.

## **WEDNESDAY, JULY 11.**

We still remain here.

All the camp grounds near the fort are literally covered with wagon irons, clothing, beans, bacon, pork and provisions of almost all kinds, which have been left by the advance immigration to lighten their loads and facilitate their speed.

## **THURSDAY, JULY 12.**

Decamp at 9 o'clock and after traveling 21 miles, we camp on a small stream. Grass poor.

59

## **FRIDAY, JULY 13.**

Weather cool. Started at seven in the morning and after 13 miles' travel, we found a most excellent spring at which we dined.

In the afternoon we cross a small stream and camp on the Platte, where we find good grass.  
(Distance, 24 miles.)

## **SATURDAY, JULY 14.**

Travel 13 miles in the forenoon and 12 in the afternoon and camped on a small river. Grass scarce.

### **SUNDAY, JULY 15.**

Weather fair and warm. Remain in camp today. We have found plenty of wood since we left Laramie. The country through this part is hilly and broken; soil barren and sterile. The health of the company is good. The cholera followed the immigration to near Fort Laramie, making sad ravages in very many companies; but it seems at last to have slackened its hold and seems to have become extinct. For the last week we have seen but few graves by the roadside.

Many were the men who left their homes for California last spring, with bright prospects of reaping a golden harvest within a few months and returning to their home and friends. But alas! their hopes were blasted, and instead they have left their bones to bleach upon the great plains of Nebraska, with not even a stone to mark their resting place. Many, who one day have been in the enjoyment of perfect health, the next have been in their graves.

60

### **MONDAY, JULY 16.**

We started in the morning and in good season, and drove 17 miles before dinner, and eight more in the afternoon. The land over which we have traveled today is very barren and produces very little, excepting wild sage weeds with a very little grass, which at this time is perfectly dry.

### **TUESDAY, JULY 17.**

Started in the morning and traveled eight miles to the lower ferry on the North Platte, where we camped. Here we found a poor ferry boat in which we carried our packs to the opposite side of the stream, and caused all of our animals to swim over. We lost one mule by being drowned, with which exception we were very fortunate. The stream at this point is very rapid and deep. Travel 12 miles in the afternoon over a barren, sandy country and camp on the Platte.

### **WEDNESDAY, JULY 18.**

Travel 18 miles up the river and camp.

The land is poor and many of our mules are in poor condition; and some of the weakest appear as if they would be unable to proceed a great distance further.

Large quantities of bacon and other kinds of provisions have been left by immigrants by the side of the road when teams became exhausted, and may be seen in large heaps on almost every camp ground.

Farming and mining implements of all descriptions, mechanics' tools, and wagons, all go to make up the list of abandoned property.

61

### **THURSDAY, JULY 19.**

Travel 12 miles and camp on the North Platte, two miles above the upper ferry, at a point where the road leaves the river.

In the afternoon we have very fine sport catching a sort of white fish from the river which are very plentiful at this place, and are a fine fish.

### **FRIDAY, JULY 20.**

We did not start today until noon.

The filter of which I have before spoken has been packed all these many miles from Independence on the mule of George Carlton. He has spoken in favor of leaving it several times, but the consent of some of the company could not be had. What could be done? The poor mule was getting weak and poor.

Mr. Carlton took the filter from the pack and put it into a thicket and informed two or three whom he well knew were in favor of leaving it behind, and said if we would “keep dark” he would let it remain there. So the filter was left behind when we started.

In the afternoon we traveled 11 miles and camped at a spring.

### **SATURDAY, JULY 21.**

Start in the morning and in ten miles' travel come to some very strong alkali water. Travel 5 miles farther and dine at a good spring.

Go 5 miles in the afternoon. Wild sage is the principal production here.

62

### **SUNDAY, JULY 22.**

Weather fine. Start in the morning and travel 20 miles. Camp on the Sweetwater River, a branch of the Platte, one mile above Independence Rock.

The country between the Platte and Sweetwater Rivers is very barren, destitute of timber, with very little grass or other vegetation, except wild sage. Much of the water is alkali, poisonous to cattle and horses and is entirely unfit for use. When water has evaporated here, a substance resembling saleratus may be gathered up in large quantities. In some cases it may be found on the surface three or four inches in thickness, white and pure as the finest pearlash manufactured; and on trail we found it equally as good for the purpose of making bread. We have seen large numbers of dead cattle by the roadside the past three days.

### **MONDAY, JULY 23.**

Remain encamped here today for the benefit of our tired mules.

We had a fine shower in the afternoon. A buffalo was killed by one of our company yesterday which affords us plenty of meat.

#### **TUESDAY, JULY 24.**

The majority of our company is not ready to advance, consequently we must remain here another day.

The excuse is made that it is necessary for the animals to recruit, but the grass is poor, and I believe the animals will gain very little. A short stop might be of some benefit, but to remain two or three days where there is very little grass seems like wasting time to no good purpose. The company is too large to travel in one body. Some are for going ahead, while others are in favor of resting. A company of ten men is quite large enough to travel expeditiously, but our company is so situated that it cannot well be dissolved at present.

#### **WEDNESDAY, JULY 25.**

We break camp and travel up the Sweetwater River an hour, which brings us to the Devil's Gate. This is a fissure in the rock in the Sweetwater River, thirty or forty feet wide, two or three hundred feet long, and perhaps two hundred feet high, through which the river passes, and is quite a natural curiosity.

Travel 20 miles and camp on the river.

#### **THURSDAY, JULY 26.**

Travel 10 miles in the forenoon and 10 in the afternoon, continuing up the Sweetwater. There is a range of mountains of each side of the valley. On the right they are composed almost entirely of barren rocks, destitute of vegetation. On the left they have some soil and some vegetation.

#### **FRIDAY, JULY 27.**

Start in the morning and after six miles' travel the road leaves the river and we travel 16 miles farther before we find either water or grass, when we reach the river again.

64

We travel up the river two miles further and camp. Grass poor. The land along the Sweetwater is very poor, with the exception of a little bottom land. Today we had a view of the snow capped mountains—the Wind River Mountains.

### **SATURDAY, JULY 28.**

Travel up the river 8 miles, where we find good grass, which we have not had the pleasure of seeing before for several days.

### **SUNDAY, JULY 29.**

Weather fair and warm.

We remained encamped here today. I went out from camp a short distance into a small piece of timber and on my return a young deer ran out before me and I shot it with my pistol through the heart. This is the first deer that has been killed by the company. Mr. Lyon also killed a Mountain Sheep, or Bighorn.

### **MONDAY, JULY 30.**

As we didn't move our camp today some of us went deer hunting. Deer were quite plentiful, and J. B. Gage killed one, which we dressed and carried four miles to camp. I fired several shots with buckshot but did not succeed in killing any game.

The country in this vicinity is broken and mountainous; soil is rocky, sandy and not very productive.

### **THE GOLDEN GATE.**

**TUESDAY, JULY 31.**

Weather fine—warm days and cool nights. Break camp at a late hour and leave the Sweetwater River, and in 16 miles' travel we intersect it again, where we unpack our mules and dine. Grouse are very plentiful in this region. Remain two hours, after which we travel up the river six miles and camp where we find good grass. The Sweetwater is a fork of the Platte and derives its name from the peculiar taste of the water.

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1.**

We are now near the summit of the Rocky Mountains, at an elevation of about 7,000 feet above the Gulf of Mexico.

There was a heavy frost this morning.

Traveled up the river 11 miles in the forenoon. In the afternoon we traveled up the river five miles farther and camped on a small branch of the Sweetwater. We left the road today with the intention of taking a straight course through the mountains to Fort Hall, thereby avoiding the circuitous route by the way of Fort Bridges.

Captain Thing, our guide, states that he once traveled the route and in his opinion we shall find good grass and water, and that there is an Indian trail through which he thinks he can follow. The main road is now several miles to the south of us. This is known as the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains. Many suppose it to be a narrow, precipitous pass with high mountains on either side; but it is directly the reverse, it being almost a level plain, extending many miles to the north and to the 66 south; and were it not that the waters divide near this place, and a portion flow to the Gulf of Mexico, and another portion to the Pacific Ocean through the Colorado River and the Gulf of California, any one would not believe that they were standing on the summit of the Rocky Mountains.

The altitude of the South Pass is said to be 7,200 feet, as taken by Col. J. C. Fremont about two years since.

#### **THURSDAY, AUGUST 2.**

The weather was so cold last night that water in our buckets was frozen over this morning.

Traveled 13 miles over a sandy, barren country and intersect the Little Sandy River, a small stream coursing south. After camping I went out and shot a dozen grouse. Several others were out at the same time and killed as many as I did.

#### **FRIDAY, AUGUST 3.**

Traveled 9 miles to the Big Sandy River and camped. Land poor and somewhat broken; destitute of timber with the exception of small willows near the streams.

#### **SATURDAY, AUGUST 4.**

Started this morning for Green River and traveled 30 miles over a barren desert, destitute of both grass and water. The country is not very broken, and we had no difficulty in traveling wherever we chose. We intersected Green River at a point where grass was abundant and wood plentiful. Mr. Hodgdon, a prominent man of our company, was taken sick yesterday and was unable to travel this morning, consequently we left him behind together with eight other men, and we shall remain here until they arrive.

#### **SUNDAY, AUGUST 5.**

Remained in camp here today. Green River is a clear, rapid stream, ten to fifteen rods wide and is fordable in many places. It is one of the principal branches of the Colorado. Its waters are very cold, and its source is said to be Fremont's Peak, a snow-capped mountain a considerable distance north, the altitude of which is about 13,000 feet.



## **MONDAY, AUGUST 6.**

As we did not start today, some of us went deer hunting and killed one buck. At 9 o'clock in the evening the men whom we left behind with Mr. Hodgdon arrived safely, he having nearly recovered.

## **TUESDAY, AUGUST 7.**

Two or three of our company were not in very good health today and consequently we remained at the old camp ground.

## **WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8.**

Our mules are in much better condition than they were when we camped on Green River. They had become so wild that it was with considerable difficulty that we could catch them this morning.

Start this morning and travel down the river about one mile where we ford it without difficulty. We then followed down the river two miles farther to a branch that came from the west. We followed this branch up 15 miles and camped.

## **THURSDAY, AUGUST 9.**

We left the stream this morning and commenced ascending a mountain. At noon we ate our dinner at a very fine mountain spring.

In the afternoon we continued to ascend and passed through a heavy growth of spruce timber. Our ascent was gradual until about 4 o'clock, when we found ourselves at the top of a peak of the Rocky Mountains. To the west and north the descent was steep—almost precipitous. We could see the stream that we had left in the morning many hundreds of feet below, but to reach it with our pack mules seemed almost an impossibility. There were but two ways from which to choose—either to descend to the stream, or retrace our steps. We were not long in deciding, and we chose the first and concluded to try to descend. In about two hours we reached the stream in a small pleasant valley.

The descent made by us was about 2,000 feet and probably about one and one-half miles in length, the greater part being covered with a thick growth of standing and fallen timber.

Captain Thing says he was never before at this place and is at a loss to know what route to take to get out. (Distance, 15 miles.)

69

#### **FRIDAY, AUGUST 10.**

We started in the morning and followed the stream up seven miles to its source. We then traveled one mile farther and halted, where we found neither water nor grass.

Captain Thing, with two or three men, went ahead to endeavor to find a passage through the mountains, which are heavily timbered and very rough and broken. They returned before night and we went on two miles farther through a dense growth of spruce, pine and fir and camped. Good grass and excellent water. This is in a small valley. (Distance, 10 miles.)

#### **SATURDAY, AUGUST 11.**

Started in good season this morning and soon after crossed some small mountainous streams, the headwaters of the Columbia. We traveled over hills and through small valleys a few miles when we began to descend a high mountain. The descent is very steep and we were an hour in making it. We reached the valley at length, through which passed a small stream with a southern course, which is probably a tributary of Bear River. We followed the valley down five miles, where we halted an hour or two, after which we packed and went down five miles farther, where we left the valley and passed over a ridge in a westerly direction and entered another small valley with a small stream.

We followed down this stream five miles and camped. We passed over places today on the sides of mountains along Indian trails which were about one foot wide, on 70 both sides of which were steeps, almost perpendicular, for hundreds of feet on the one side up and on the other down; and in many places, should a horse or mule make a misstep, they would be precipitated to the bottom. This

is not only disagreeable and perplexing traveling, but dangerous. The mountains are very rough and broken and are principally heavily timbered. A great part of the timber has been killed by fire. Where we halted at noon I found strawberries plentiful and fine. The 11th of August seems late for that kind of fruit.

We have passed over several snow banks within two or three days, and sometimes found beautiful flowers in blossom within 20 feet of them. (Distance, 20 miles.)

### **SUNDAY, AUGUST 12.**

We had a dispute, or difference of opinion, this morning about starting. Captain Thing wished to remain here today and look out a route for tomorrow, and go straight through to Fort Hall. He thought we had come too far north for the route he had taken eleven years previous, and said that had caused our misfortune.

A part of the company desired to remain and follow the guide. The others had lost all confidence in his knowledge as a guide in the Rocky Mountain country, and wished to start today and follow the small stream down to Bear River valley, where it was thought to flow.

A vote of the company was taken on the question and the latter party was in the majority.

We started at 8 o'clock and travelled down the stream a distance of about 22 miles, where we intersected Bear River valley near the mouth of Smith's Fork where the 71 road crosses the same. We traveled three miles farther and camped on Bear River.

Our road today was wellnigh impassable. We are once again on the California trail after having wandered in the mountains for twelve days. Many ox teams that were behind us when we left the road on the Sweetwater River, are now many miles in advance of us. This route has been christened "Thing's Cutoff." A majority of the company was in favor of trying it, relying on Captain Thing's knowledge of the country and experience.

### **MONDAY, AUGUST 13.**

Traveled ten miles down the river, crossed Thomas' Fork and camped.

Bear River valley is very beautiful and possesses a fertile soil, but the altitude is high. The nights are probably frosty.

Bear River discharges its waters into Great Salt Lake at its northern extremity. The River Jordan also discharges its Salt Lake at its south side, and yet the lake has no visible outlet. (Distance, 10 miles.)

### **TUESDAY, AUGUST 14.**

In the forenoon we passed over a high spur of the mountains and intersected the river again near Peg Leg Smith's, an old one-legged trader who has lived here among the Indians fourteen years. He has a small log cabin and one or two other small buildings.

We saw an old Mormon here who tried hard to induce us to go by the way of Salt Lake City. He said it would be no farther than to follow the California trail, and offered us his services as a pilot. A majority of the company were at first in favor of adopting that plan, but on referring the matter to Peg Leg Smith, who is perfectly well acquainted with both routes, we learned that the old Mormon was lying and that the distance by way of the Mormon city would be at least 150 miles greater. Smith has a squaw wife, and trades with the Indians and immigrants.

We left the Mormon and traveled six miles and camped. (Distance, 18 miles.)

### **WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15.**

Traveled 20 miles down Bear River and camped. The weather is fine.

### **THURSDAY, AUGUST 16.**

Started in the morning and after 13 miles of travel reached the Soda Springs. From the journals of Col. John C. Fremont, Bryant and others, anyone would suppose that the waters of these springs were a delicious beverage to the weary traveler, and I had been led to anticipate having a fine draught of soda from nature's own fountains, pure and unadulterated. I came up to one of the springs where several members of the company were drinking from a tin cup. Feeling somewhat thirsty I did not wait my turn for the cup, but lay down to drink from the spring. I drank one or two swallows when I arose, perfectly satisfied with soda water. I very much disliked its taste. Of all the bad water I have been obliged to drink on the plains it is the worst of all.

73

There are several of these springs in this vicinity, but the most interesting of all is near the bank of Bear River, and is known as the Steamboat Spring. It issues from a hole in a rock, a foot or more in diameter, and at one moment the water will boil up a foot or two above the surface of the rock and at the next it will settle down so that no water will be visible. Thus it continues to ebb and flow, and has ever since first discovered by white men, it is said.

The chemical qualities I will not undertake to explain. Some of the company seemed to like the taste of the soda water, but I noticed they did not drink very heartily from it. Three miles from the Soda Springs we came to a fork in the road—one branch leading to Fort Hall, it being the old Oregon Trail of about 1843. The other is a new trail called the "Immigrants' Cutoff," which is said to be 20 or 30 miles shorter.

By a majority vote of the company we concluded to take the cutoff. We soon after passed near an extinct crater, which at some time in the past, had vomited forth its molten lava and covered the plains over which we passed.

Traveled until about 9 o'clock and camped on a small stream. (Distance, 28 miles.)

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 17.**

We started late in the morning and traveled eight miles in the forenoon and ten in the afternoon and camped where we found good grass and good water, which are 74 the two principal requisites to a good camp ground. (Distance, 18 miles.)

#### **SATURDAY, AUGUST 18.**

Traveled ten miles in the forenoon and 12 in the afternoon, and camped at a fine spring. Springs are plentiful on this road and grass is good.

#### **SUNDAY, AUGUST 19.**

Remained encamped today. Water was frozen over to the thickness of a quarter of an inch last night. Summer berries are very plentiful along the route. They much resemble the sugar plum of New England, but are nearly as large as a good sized cherry. We have found the road very hilly for the last two or three days.

#### **MONDAY, AUGUST 20.**

Started at 8 o'clock in the morning and traveled eight and one-half hours before we found water. Camped at a fine spring. (Distance, 25 miles.)

#### **TUESDAY, AUGUST 21.**

Traveled 11 miles in the forenoon and five in the afternoon. Camped at a spring at the south of the road.

#### **WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22.**

Decamped and nine miles of travel brought us to a small stream, after which we cross a barren plain, 12 miles broad, destitute of wood, water and grass.

After we had crossed the desert plain we found a small stream of clear, cool water at which we halted two hours and became refreshed. We traveled six miles to Raft River and camped. Here we intersected the old trail from Fort Hall to California. The trail through the Cutoff—a distance of about 120 miles—is good with the exception of being considerably uneven.

#### **THURSDAY, AUGUST 23.**

Started at 1 o'clock P.M. and traveled up the stream 11 miles and camped. Road very dry and extremely dusty. Raft River is a tributary of Snake River, which is one of the principal forks of the Columbia.

Finding good grass three or four feet high in this valley, and our stock being in poor condition for traveling, we concluded to remain here until Monday morning. A few of our mules and horses have been left behind, they having become completely worn out or exhausted.

#### **MONDAY, AUGUST 27.**

Decamped at an early hour and 11 miles of travel brought us to a small stream where we dined. Eight miles further we intersected the Mormon road, leading from Salt Lake City to California. Camped at a spring six miles farther on.

Calvin S. Fifield and Dr. Haynes left the company this morning and went on in advance, with the intention of buying their provisions of the immigrants and of camping with them, and of arriving in California in advance of 76 the body of the company, and making necessary arrangements for its reception.

#### **TUESDAY, AUGUST 28.**

Traveled 11 miles in the forenoon over a hilly and broken country, when we came to Goose Creek in latitude 41° 45' agreeable to an observation taken by the quadrant.

Traveled up the stream 10 miles in the afternoon. Road level and dusty. Good water and poor grass.

It is thought by many that the Mormons of Salt Lake City have discovered rich gold mines on this stream, and that they are now privately working them and are doing well. How far the statement deserves credit is not known, but I have seen no good reason to believe it.

### **WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29.**

We started at seven in the morning and traveled 12 miles in the forenoon, when we halted for dinner; after which we traveled 15 miles before finding water. We camped at a spring where grass was not very plentiful.

### **THURSDAY, AUGUST 30.**

Very cold morning. Ice formed one-half inch in thickness. We traveled 12 miles in the forenoon over a barren desert and nooned in a small valley, where we found a small quantity of poor water.

Traveled up the valley eight miles in the afternoon and camped at a spring. Grass good.

77

### **FRIDAY, AUGUST 31.**

Started at seven in the morning and traveled up the valley eight miles, where we intersected a small stream where we halted for dinner, after which we traveled two miles and came to a warm spring, the water of which is so hot that the hand cannot be held in it for a moment with comfort. Traveled eight miles farther up the valley, thence over a high mountain ridge and camped at a spring.

### **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1.**

In the forenoon we traveled over a barren plain, ten miles in extent, when we found a spring. Traveled seven miles in the afternoon and intersected a tributary of Mary's River, or Humboldt River, and camped.



## **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 2.**

We did not move our camp today. Grass good. All in good health.

## **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3.**

Traveled down the Humboldt valley 11 miles in the forenoon and dined on the river, which at this point is a small stream of clear water.

The valley is broad with a fertile soil which produces a good quality of grass. At this time it is parched with drouth. We traveled down the valley 12 miles over a level road, and camped where we found plenty of grass, four or five feet high, very thick and of fine quality. The land in this vicinity is fertile, but is entirely destitute of 78 timber, with the exception of some small willows near the streams. The Mormon whom we met on Bear River told us that the grass on Mary's River had been entirely consumed by fire which had been set by the Digger tribe of Indians for the purpose of preventing the immigrants from passing through to California, and that in his opinion it was an impossibility to travel over that portion of the route with teams of horses or cattle. And further, that authentic reports had reached Salt Lake City that men, women and children were traveling barefooted and destitute of provisions, and that many were dying daily of starvation and exposure. However, his very pitiful tale was not credited to any great extent by our company. His motive, probably, was to induce us to go by the way of the Mormon settlement and sell them a portion of our stock at whatever price they might feel willing to pay. Captain Thing sold him a cow, much against the will of a majority of the company.

They have agents along the road to decoy immigrants through their settlements and then make as much out of them as possible. (Traveled 23 miles.)

## **TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4.**

Started in good season this morning and in seven miles of travel we crossed a fork of Mary's River—coming from the north—after which we traveled 16 miles and camped on the river, where we found good grass.

We passed over some sand hills today where the road was extremely dusty. After traveling a few miles over this dusty road on a warm day a white man will be 79 equally as black as a negro. The dust here is different from anything of the kind that I have ever before seen. It bears a strong resemblance to ashes in some respects, both in appearance and smell, and seems to contain quite a large percentage of alkali.

### **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5.**

We started this morning at sunrise and passed down the Humboldt a few miles, where we met a large train of Mormon teams, 53 days from Sutter's Fort in the Sacramento River valley, on their way to Salt Lake City. They report the miners in California as doing well, and some of them stated that they had as much gold as they wished for.

Traveled 15 miles in the forenoon and 10 in the afternoon and camped on the river, where we found but little grass.

### **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6.**

Started in the morning and went down the river three miles, when we left the same and commenced ascending a mountain, and traveled 18 miles through a mountainous country and over a rough road before we again intersected the river. We then traveled down the river a mile and camped. Grass poor.

Our stock is again in poor condition for traveling, and we have yet a long road before us before we reach the Sacramento valley. Our cattle, which are our principal dependence for our food, are almost destitute of fat or suet, and are composed chiefly of hide, horns, cords and gristle and

lean, flabby meat. It is not very nutritious so living. Our appetites are wonderfully good. We have sometimes boiled the hide when we had plenty of time.

## **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 7.**

Decamped at sunrise this morning and traveled 11 miles in the forenoon over a very poor and barren country.

In the afternoon we met a train of United States Government teams from Oregon, under the command of Gen. Joel Palmer. This train left Oregon early in the spring, and came by the way of California, where it is thought it remained a long time. It was sent from Oregon with provisions for the benefit of the United States soldiers who are on their way thither to assist the Oregonians in repelling the barbarous attacks of the Indians upon their settlements, it is said, and General Palmer expects to meet the command near Fort Hall.

General Palmer reports having had a serious battle with the Digger Indians at Mud Lake, where he lost one man killed and had two or three wounded.

Traveled 10 miles in the afternoon and camped on the river, where we found good grass.

## **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8.**

Traveled down the river 10 miles in the morning, when we left it and pursued a straight course over a barren plain on which nothing grows except wild sage and greasewood.

After traveling four miles across the desert we again intersected the river and camped. Some of our company

SAN FRANCISCO, 1849.

81 who followed the trail are in advance of the train, and will probably camp with some other train.

The days are very warm but the nights are cool and pleasant.

### **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9.**

Finding a good supply of grass at this camp ground we did not move our camp today.

### **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10.**

Broke camp at six o'clock this morning and traveled down the river 12 miles in the forenoon and 13 in the afternoon and camped. Grass poor.

### **TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11.**

Decamped at 5.30 o'clock this morning and traveled 11 miles in the forenoon and 12 in the afternoon. The road down this river is comfortably good, but is very dry and dusty. The weather has been extremely warm today.

### **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12.**

Traveled ten miles in the forenoon and nine in the afternoon and camped on the river. A slight shower of rain fell during the night.

### **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13.**

Traveled 16 miles in the forenoon and eight more in the afternoon and camped on the river, where we found a limited quantity of grass.

82

### **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14.**

Traveled 12 miles in the forenoon and halted where grass was not very plentiful. In the afternoon we traveled five miles farther, when we came to another fork in the road.

The left hand road is the old trail and leads down the river to the “Sink,” as it is called, it being where the water of the river disappears in the sandy desert, as is the case with a majority of the streams of the “Great Interior Basin.”

From the “Sink” the road passes thence over a desert plain to Salmon Trout River, and thence across the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the Sacramento valley. The distance from this place to the Sacramento valley, according to the best information in our possession, is about 300 miles.

The other, or right hand road, is called the Cherokee Cutoff, and the distance is said to be but 180 miles from this place to the Feather River gold mines.

83

### **CHAPTER III.**

#### **THE HUMBOLDT RIVER TRAIL**

The question arose, which of the two roads shall we pursue—follow the old road—the advantages and disadvantages of which we are pretty well informed; or shall we risk the new one of which we know nothing, except from unreliable reports.

The question was submitted to a vote of the company, and it was in favor of trying the “Cutoff,” as it is called, with scarcely a dissenting vote. Haynes and Fifield, who left the company at Raft River, left a posted notice here, which showed them to be several days in advance of us. They chose the old trail, and cautioned us against taking the new one, as it was their opinion that it was a longer and a poorer road.

The “Cutoff” leaves the Humboldt River at a bend, where it curves more southerly, and at what in later times was called “Wannamucca” on the Central Pacific Railroad. The “Cutoff” leaves the river and crosses a desert plain, very barren and slightly undulating, in a westerly direction.

We left the Humboldt with the expectation of being at the gold mines in about a week, providing the reports were reliable as to the distance. We traveled 14 miles after leaving the river before we found water. At that place we found a spring, but there being several trains camped 84 here tonight, it was with great difficulty that we could procure water sufficient for the needs of our mules and horses.

There is not a spear of grass to be found in this section, and we were compelled to tie our mules to sage brush to keep them from straying away, without a particle of food. (Distance, 31 miles.)

### **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15.**

We started this morning at 5.30 o'clock and traveled 19 miles across a barren, undulating desert, when we came to a place known as the Rabbit Wells, where four or five wells, some 8 or 10 feet deep, have been excavated by the immigrants in advance for the purpose of obtaining water for themselves and their stock.

These wells, with one or two exceptions, were filled with dead animals. Having seen the water at the bottom and being so eager to obtain it, they rushed head first into them, where they perished and could not well be extricated. The water of these wells is of a poor quality and proved to be scarce.

After traveling six or seven hours over a very dusty road on a hot day, it is far better than none. There was a large number of immigrants at the wells and it was difficult to obtain a sufficient quantity of water, it being dipped up with tin cups as fast as it ran into the wells. We remained there one hour and a half and obtained what water we were able to, but could get very little for our animals. Neither was there anything for them to eat.

85

As we had no beef killed we had nothing for dinner. Beef had been our principal dependence for some time past. It had become very poor and we had almost nothing to cook it with. There are no "Buffalo chips" this side of the Rockies.

We started in the afternoon and at about sunset came in sight of Black Rock (Spring), which was then about nine miles distant across a level, barren plain.

When within about six miles of Black Rock one of the mules which I was driving became so exhausted that he refused to go any farther, and I was obliged to unpack and leave him with the pack by the roadside; after which I reached Black Rock at about eleven o'clock at night.

The company, with a few exceptions, had arrived in advance of me and were principally asleep. I traveled the whole distance (40 miles) on foot, and drove two mules and one horse, which made considerable extra travel. I had no dinner or supper, and after arriving at Black Rock, rolled myself in my blankets and was soon asleep.

#### **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16.**

The country over which we made forty miles yesterday is known as the Black Rock Desert, and the road is literally strewn with dead animals—cattle, horses and mules. The stench of these dead and decaying carcasses contributes largely to render the traveling still more disagreeable than it would otherwise be.

The Black Rock Spring, so-called, is a spring several feet in diameter, out of which the water is continually boiling at or near a boiling point. The water may be drunk after being cooled sufficiently, but is not very good water.

We started early this morning and traveled three miles where we found a small quantity of grass and camped. This is the first grass that our animals have found to eat since Friday noon—nearly 45 hours—since which time we have traveled over 60 miles. After we had camped we had a beef animal slaughtered, and a little before noon we managed to get a breakfast, which was the first that some of us had eaten since Friday night.

There are several hot springs in this vicinity. Beef will cook quite quickly in them.

Some of our mules and cattle were left behind on the road yesterday, with a few packs by the roadside.

George Carlton, with two or three others of the company, went back to procure the packs, together with as many of the animals as were able to be brought into camp. They succeeded in bringing into camp the whole number that had been left by our company. (Distance, 3 miles.)

#### **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17.**

Started in the afternoon and traveled eleven miles where we found some grass and camped.

#### **TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18.**

We remained here until afternoon, when we broke camp and traveled 15 miles to Mud Lake, where we stopped for the night. Our course since leaving Humboldt has been nearly northwest and we have traveled upward of 80 miles.

87

The country is nearly all a barren desert, with very little vegetation except wild sage. What is known as Mud Lake resembles at this time a marsh more than a lake, and is covered with large coarse grass. It may, perhaps, be more of a lake at some seasons of the year. (Distance, 15 miles.)

#### **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19.**

We did not move our camp today.

This is the point where General Palmer's corps had a battle with the Indians a few weeks since, but we have not seen an Indian since we left the Humboldt River.

A large percentage of the immigration took this route and have passed this point, but it is thought now that the report stating that it did not exceed 180 miles from the Humboldt to Feather River mines, was very unreliable and untruthful.



#### **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20.**

We started in the morning and soon after entered a canyon and traveled 12 miles in the forenoon and halted where the rocky bluffs rise nearly 300 feet almost perpendicularly on either side.

Traveled up the canyon nine miles in the afternoon and camped at a spring. Canyon I believe to be a Spanish word and means a deep gorge, ravine, or gulch between high, steep banks, worn by water courses.

#### **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21.**

Cold morning. Started at 7 o'clock in the morning and traveled up the canyon 12 miles in the forenoon over a very rough road. In the afternoon we traveled 7 miles and camped at a spring.

#### **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22.**

Started early in the morning and went over a ridge a distance of 7 miles, thence over a plain 10 miles and camped.

We had a distant view of the Sierra Nevada Mountains today.

#### **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23.**

Traveled 5 miles today and camped at a spring.

#### **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24.**

Decamped early in the morning and after traveling 10 miles, passed several hot springs. Went 9 miles farther and found good grass and water, where we halted two hours, after which we traveled 3 miles and camped at the base of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in some large timber, it being the first large trees we have met with since coming into the Great Interior Basin, a distance of about 700 miles. With the exception of a few small valleys along the streams and lakes and at the base of

the mountains, the Great Basin seems to be a very barren country. It is a very disagreeable country to travel over.

## **TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25.**

We started this morning and traveled northerly along the base of the Sierras about six miles. We then began to ascend toward the summit of the ridge, and after 89 traveling three miles up a very steep ascent we reached the summit.

This seems to be the “Divide” between the waters of the Great Basin and those of the Pacific Ocean. After reaching the summit we soon began to descend and after a descent of one mile entered a beautiful valley. In the afternoon we traveled 10 miles through a heavy growth of yellow pine timber and camped.

It was after dark before we camped and we unpacked our mules at the top of a steep bluff overlooking a lake, known as Goose Lake. No water near our camp ground. The company is scattered tonight, having camped in several different places along the trail.

After we had camped Mr. Carlton and myself volunteered to go to the lake for water, and with buckets we started down the steep, rocky bluff which we found difficult of descent, especially in the dark. The distance was about one-half mile to the base, or shore of the lake, where we anticipated finding an abundant supply of water. But to our great disappointment, we found nothing but a field of dry sand.

However, we supposed we must be very near the shore of the lake, and started in that direction. We traveled about two miles farther over the dry sand, indulging the fond hope of soon reaching the waters of the lake, when we would have the privilege and pleasure of quenching our thirst, which was almost unbearable.

But we were doomed to disappointment as we found nothing but a lake of sand—dry and difficult to travel over; and we returned—climbed the mountain and lay down to rest as best we could. To be really thirsty, with no means of getting water, is truly a horrid sensation. (Distance, 20 miles.)

### **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26.**

We left camp early in the morning and eventually reached an abundant supply of water.

We left the Oregon trail, which bears northerly along the west end of Goose Lake, our course being nearly south. Our camp last night was near the line separating the Territories of California and Oregon. We traveled down a valley and camped on a small mountain stream. Road good. (Distance, 17 miles.)

### **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27.**

After traveling a short distance this morning we came to the head of Pitt River.

Traveled down the valley 12 miles in the forenoon and 9 in the afternoon and camped on the river, which is a rapid stream nearly as large as the Humboldt.

### **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28.**

Traveled down the river 23 miles and found an excellent road and a good supply of grass.

### **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29.**

Traveled 20 miles over a rough road and camped on Pitt River. Grass good.

### **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30.**

We did not move our camp today. Latitude 40° 7'.

The valley along this river has a fertile soil and produces a good quality and a sufficient quantity of grass, but is bordered on both sides by lofty mountains, timbered with pine, fir and spruce. The Indians are said to be very hostile, but we have not met with any since crossing the mountains. They are said to have killed several immigrants within a short time.

#### **MONDAY, OCTOBER 1.**

We left camp at an early hour and traveled down the river 14 miles in the forenoon and 8 in the afternoon. We found a good road and grass plentiful.

#### **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2.**

We broke camp at 7 in the morning and soon after left the river and went over a rough, hilly road 12 miles, where we stopped near a small stream and had our lunch. In the afternoon we traveled 7 miles and camped at a spring.

The road was uneven and through a heavy growth of timber. We met with some oak timber on the road today, it being the first we have seen since near the Missouri line.

#### **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3.**

Started early and first traveled up a long hill, or mountain about 6 miles, and thence 5 miles farther, and finding no water we halted. In the afternoon we traveled 11 miles, where we found good water and camped. The country through which we have traveled today is well timbered.

92

#### **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4.**

Broke camp at 7 o'clock in the morning and traveled 15 miles in the forenoon and halted at Little Goose Lake. We traveled 4 miles in the afternoon, when we found a bountiful supply of good grass and water and camped.

## **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5.**

We traveled 14 miles and camped at Feather Lake, it being the source of the north fork of Feather River. country appears to be nearly all very heavily timbered.

## **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6.**

We traveled 6 miles through a dense forest and reached a branch of Feather River; then traveled down the river 6 miles, where we came into a large meadow; thence down along the meadow 5 miles and camped. A branch of Feather River passes through this meadow and it is known as the Feather River Meadow.

## **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7.**

Traveled down the river 2 miles and camped.

## **MONDAY, OCTOBER 8.**

It was thought by many of the company that it might be practical to follow the river down to the Feather River mines, and thus save much time and travel in avoiding the long, circuitous route by the way of the Sacramento valley and Lassen's Ranch, and consequently, six of us started in the morning with about two days' rations, 93 pursued a southerly course through the mountains and in six miles of travel came to a small stream. We then crossed a mountain ridge about 9 miles and came into a fine bottom prairie 8 miles in length with a small stream passing through the center. We went down the valley three miles, built a fire by the side of a large pine log, and ate our supper. The meal finished we laid ourselves down for the night—Indian fashion—keeping one at a time of the party on watch during the night to give the alarm should any Indians make their appearance. We discovered fresh Indian signs in the little valley today.

## **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9.**

The morning was cool and very foggy. We started as soon as it was fairly light, and went on down the little valley to the southern end, where the stream enters a deep, high canyon with high precipitous mountains on both sides. We traveled down the canyon about one mile farther and found the mountains so extremely rough, we became convinced that it would be an impossibility to travel through them with mules and horses. We gave up the expedition and started for camp, where we arrived about one o'clock very much fatigued.

We did not move our camp today.

### **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10.**

Traveled 10 miles in the forenoon and 8 miles in the afternoon and camped on Deer Creek.

94

### **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11.**

A part of the night was rainy, which was not very agreeable, as we have not had our tents set for a long time, or since we left Raft River. We traveled 10 miles in the forenoon and halted at a spring where there was no grass. In the afternoon we went on 8 miles farther and camped at a spring. No grass.

### **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12.**

We started at one o'clock at night and traveled over a rough road through a dense forest 10 miles and halted, where we found water one-half mile north of the road—down a steep mountain—but no grass.

Started again at 8 o'clock and after traveling six miles we emerged from the dense forest through which we have traveled for several days past, and came into a very barren country. Went five miles farther and halted, with neither grass nor water.

In the afternoon we traveled nine miles and camped on Antelope Creek, one mile south of the road. The country through which we have traveled today is extremely rough and barren. (Distance, 30 miles.)

#### **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13.**

Break camp in the morning and after three miles of travel we entered the Sacramento valley—the valley which we have so long wished to see. Traveled eight miles farther and halted on Deer Creek.

In the afternoon we passed Lassen's Ranch and camped on the bank of the Sacramento River. (Distance, 17 miles.)

95

The full distance from where we left the old trail at Winnemucca on the Humboldt to this place, as kept by me, is 466 miles; and since we left Independence, Mo., 2,130 miles.

#### **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14.**

Moved our camp down the river one mile and camped again.

#### **MONDAY, OCTOBER 15.**

We did not move our camp today.

#### **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16.**

We traveled down the Sacramento 23 miles and camped on a creek. We have found fine grass since we entered this valley.

#### **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17.**

We traveled 24 miles down the river and crossed Feather River and camped on the southern bank.

We are now very near Feather River mines, which we were told we could reach in 180 miles from the forks of the roads on the Humboldt at Winnemucca. Instead, as per my account, which I believe is very nearly correct, the distance is 514 miles as we have traveled it.

We left the Humboldt River, September 14, and reached here October 17, being 33 days on the “Greenhorn's Cutoff,” as it is now commonly known. Probably nearly one-half of the immigrants came by this route.

#### **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18.**

We remained encamped here today, endeavoring to make some division of the property of the Granite State 96 and California Mining and Trading Company, but did not agree upon any plan that was satisfactory to a majority.

#### **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19.**

A division of the stock—cattle, mules and horses—was effected in the forenoon, and some of us went up to the mines in the afternoon. A portion of the members appeared dissatisfied with the division. We had but few cattle left and they were very thin and in poor condition. Many of our mules and horses had died, and were left on the road; and those that were alive were nearly all seemingly worn out and of but little value.

The Granite State and California Mining and Trading Company was this day dissolved by a unanimous vote of its members.

It would have been dissolved long before it reached California had it not been for the beef cattle, which were the means of holding it together. They were their principle dependence for food, and it was not practical to divide them among small squads, as they would have been of very little benefit to them.



When we entered the Sacramento valley we had but three or four young cattle and they were so very poor that they could scarcely travel. They constituted our entire stock of provisions.

Two or three gross errors were committed by the managers before we left Boston, which were the cause, in great part, of the great length of time consumed on the road. First, the company should not have consisted of more than ten members, and it should not have been a

SUTTER's MILL, 1849.

97 joint stock company; but each member should have provided for himself as he saw fit, with mules and provisions.

Then we should have had good mules, not less than four years old, and such as had been broken to packing. The majority of our mules were not over two or three years of age and had never been broken. They were entirely unfit for the exceedingly strenuous journey “across the plains.” For a pack train to drive cattle on that journey for their dependence for their provisions is a great absurdity.

Had we traveled as rapidly as we expected and intended to have done when we started on the journey, we could not have driven our cattle very long until they would have died.

Each man should have owned three or four trained mules in good condition. I am of the opinion that under good conditions and properly managed, the journey may be made, fairly easily, in 70 days, with a good pack train consisting of 10 or 12 active, energetic and courageous men. We were about 144 days on the road, or about twice the time that should have been needed under proper conditions and management.

The last cutoff, or the “Greenhorn's Cutoff,” as it became to be generally known, that we were induced to adopt proved to be more than 300 miles farther than it was represented to be in distance, and probably more than 200 miles longer than the old California trail that we left.

It was currently reported and probably with truth, that some time early in August, after the immigrants had begun to pass down the trail on the Humboldt River, a 98 man with a party was sent out over the mountains and deserts by Lassen, whose ranch was located on the Sacramento River, to induce so much of the immigration as possible to take that route and which he called the “Cherokee Cutoff,” and represented the distance to be but 180 miles to the Feather River mines, with a good road to travel over with many superior advantages over the old trail.

This new route entered the Sacramento valley near the Lassen ranch, and as Lassen owned many cattle and horses, he was able to profit largely by his trade with the tired and famished immigrants.

He probably succeeded in profiting several thousand dollars by his trade with the poor immigrants, and it is currently reported that the immigrants have threatened his life, and that they have killed many of his cattle for food, without any remuneration to him.

A large number of immigrants are still behind, many of them with little or no subsistence, and had not the Californians sent out mules, horses, cattle and provisions, probably many of them would have perished with starvation.

The journey “across the plains” is a very hard experience, the hardships and privations of which cannot be realized by any one who has not undertaken it.

On the other hand, it presents much interesting scenery—the grand, the beautiful and the sublime. Lofty mountains and green, verdant valleys, majestic rivers and sandy, barren plains—all contribute, with much more, to make it a very interesting, and in a way, an enjoyable experience.

99

Nature may be seen in its wildest grandeur where civilization and art have neither added to its usefulness nor retrenched its beauty.

The full distance traveled from Independence, Mo., to the Sacramento River, at Lassen's Ranch, as kept by me, is as follows:

In May, 73 miles; in June, 429 miles; in July, 436 miles; in August, 471 miles; in September, 523 miles; in October, 198 miles. This makes it 2,130 miles to Sacramento River. To Feather River, near Oroville, 2,178 miles.

100

## CHAPTER V.

### THE LAND OF GOLD.

The following pages are from the original manuscript written by Kimball Webster, which relates a few of the many experiences in California from October, 1849, to June, 1851, and in Oregon from June, 1851, to July, 1854.—EDITOR.

At that time California and Oregon were both territories and belonged to the United States, and both in a semi-primitive condition. California had been a part of Mexico until 1847, only two years prior to the time of which I am writing. This seems difficult to comprehend at the present time, 1914, when California and Oregon have taken their places among the great and leading states of the Union, as to population, wealth and influences.

On the arrival in California of the gold seekers of 1849, the prospects did not present as favorable and promising an appearance to a large percentage of the newly arrived immigrants as they had been led to picture to their imagination. Very many of them had believed that once they were in the mines, gold would be found in such quantities it would require but a few weeks, or months at the most, for them to be able to gather enough of the precious metal to enable them to return to their homes independent for the rest of their lives.

101

Many, however, were doomed to a most sad and bitter disappointment, and far better would it have been for such had they remained at home and enjoyed the domestic pleasures which they had left behind.

It was found that to make a success of mining gold from the California mines was one of the most laborious kinds of employment that a man could engage in; and required energy and perseverance to ensure a reasonably profitable return as a whole.

Some, it is true, were fortunate in finding gold in such quantities as to enable them to gather a moderate fortune in comparatively a short time and return to their homes. But these were exceptions.

I believe that one ounce of gold per day was above the average pay of the miners then actually at work in mining in the placer mines of California.

There was then, and for years later, a large percentage of the California miners not at work. Some would be traveling through the mountains with pick, shovel and pan, together with as much provisions as they were able to carry—"prospecting," as it was called, or searching for a "rich lead." Sometimes their labors would be happily and richly rewarded, but more often were they sadly disappointed. Many at that time were lying under friendly trees, or in their tents, having been stricken down by the prevalent diseases, at that time raging in the country, many dying almost daily. A very large number had been brought up without labor, and some were too indolent to labor; or perhaps, had been clerks or students, and to make enough for their present needs was as much 102 as many were able to accomplish. Others would gamble at the Monte table, or at poker.

Owing to the influx of immigration into the territory in such large numbers, it was deemed best by many of the people to form a state constitution, and then ask admission to the Union. Accordingly, a convention was called at Monterey, which framed a constitution, and a little later it was submitted to the people, who almost unanimously adopted it, and immediately forwarded it to Washington.

The first gold dust seen by me in California was at Lassen's Ranch, near where we entered the Sacramento valley. At that point there were traders selling provisions, mining implements, clothing and other needed articles to the unfortunate immigrants who had entered the valley by the way of

“Greenhorn's Cutoff,” and to miners that were traveling up the valley to Redding's mines; these men taking in exchange gold dust which they wished with small scales provided for that purpose.

Gold dust at sixteen dollars per ounce was the principal medium of exchange in California. Some of the dust was nearly clean, and some had considerable quantities of black sand mixed with it. This at first seemed to be a very inconvenient manner of making change and paying for goods, but it possessed its good qualities.

The newcomer with his exalted ideas, on seeing the small quantity which he would receive for one, two, three or even five dollars, and so very fine was the dust, that it looked to him almost insignificant. Some of it was so very fine that it almost required a microscope to be able to discover its separate particles. A person must be able to earn something to make a living here.

Flour retails at 40 cents per pound; pork from 50 to 75 cents; potatoes at \$1.50 per pound; sugar 50 cents; eggs \$5.00 per dozen; a pick or shovel \$8 to \$10 each; rockers to wash gold with in the mines, from \$40 to \$50 each; a quicksilver gold rocker \$300; lumber in the mines sold for \$2.00 per foot, or at the rate of \$2000 per thousand feet, and at Sacramento City it sold at six hundred dollars per thousand.

Other necessities sold at equally as high prices in proportion. Such seemingly exorbitant prices seemed at first to the newly arrived immigrant as if he was being robbed. It seemed far different to those that have been here a few weeks. In buying provisions or other necessities they do not appear to think any more about paying the California prices than they would the customary prices when at their homes.

This at present is a fast country, and money must be made fast or the miners could not make a comfortable livelihood, having to pay such prices. It is said that in case a person is taken sick here and employs a physician, that the M. D. will size his “pile,” whether large or small. Probably this was not strictly true in all cases, but in many cases they collected very exorbitant fees. It was also a prevailing opinion among the miners that many of the physicians now in the country do not understand the prevailing diseases of the country; and that many of them are the cause of

more sickness and death than they are the means of saving lives. How far this is true I will not undertake to determine; but from what I saw at this 104 time and later, there were apparently a few good, skilled physicians in the country, and very many whose success seemed to be quite poor and unfortunate for some cause.

It seemed to require but two things only to kill the strongest man in California, however slight the disease might at first be. First, to apply for a doctor; and second, to lose his courage and believe he would soon die, and that he would never see his home and friends again. With this combination I never knew the first man to recover under similar circumstances, in the early days of California.

The population of the country at this time was a heterogeneous mass from almost all parts of the civilized world. New England is well represented. The majority of the Yankees came by the way of Cape Horn; some across the Isthmus of Panama, and a few across the country.

Missouri probably had more immigrants in California, by far, than any other state, and for some reason which is not easy to explain, they were not so popular as those from most other states. They were popularly known by others as “Pukes.” Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin and Iowa all sent large numbers. New York sent a large delegation, the larger part by water. From the southern slaveholding states there were but comparatively few.

England, France, Germany and Ireland were all quite largely represented. Also Sidney, New South Wales, which had formerly been England's penal colony for many years. Very large numbers came from this colony, a great majority of them being former convicts. These were by far the worst class of people then in California. 105 They were principally English, Scotch and Irish, but the greatest number were Scotch. They had formerly been transported from England, Scotland and Ireland for some serious crime committed, and dared not return to their homes, many of them being under penalty of death. But they could come to California and there was no penalty attached, or no one to question their right to do so, and they enjoyed equal rights with the American citizen. There were also many Mexicans and Chilians at work in the mines, packing mule trains with provisions, mining

tools, etc. Many of them were very treacherous, being mixed breeds, and if possible, worse than the Sidney Ducks, as they were called, and I believe more treacherous than the North American Indian.

All classes of people were here—mechanics, clerks, men of all professions mingled together to make up the population. Here were doctors and lawyers hard at work in the mines, clerks who had never before performed a day's work of manual labor, with a red flannel shirt on, their sleeves rolled up, armed with a pick and shovel, digging their fortunes from the banks and bars of the rivers. Ministers of the Gospel seeking wild speculations, and a few of them seated behind a table dealing “Monte,” or some other game of chance. Sailors and soldiers also formed a considerable percentage of the mining population, and seemed to be just as independent as a member of Congress, and were probably making, many of them, larger pay.

On Friday, October 19, The Granite State and California Mining and Trading Company, about which there 106 was so much talk in Boston and Pelham, was practically dissolved, its former members going various ways.

Some went to Sacramento City; some to Feather River mines; and some in other directions, each for himself, and no longer trammelled by the restrictions of a joint stock company.

The Pelham folks moved up to Long's Bar on Feather River, some five or six miles from the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains. At this place there was a small town consisting of a few stores and quite a large number of mining camps.

A few of the miners had tents, some had brush shanties, and many more with nothing for a shelter but the trees. At night there was no necessity for shelter, the weather being clear and dry without a particle of dew to moisten the earth.

Here the miners were at work along the banks of the river, some digging in the crevices of the rocks and washing the pay dirt in a pan, while others were taking their dirt from the banks in larger quantities and washing it in cradles made for that purpose. The country about this place is hilly and

is covered with a growth of several species of oak. The Live Oak is an evergreen and is scrubby and small. The White Oak is of a larger size, but is low and branching.

The land here is not very heavily timbered, much of it being "Oak Openings." The soil is red.

Some of the Pelham folks that came with us thought perhaps it would be wise and profitable to form a company and send to Sacramento City for their winter provisions; and accordingly the writings were drawn up and 107 signed by the following persons: Doctor Amos Batchelder, George Carlton, Samuel Worcester Gage, Robert Thom, Jacob Morris, Joseph Davis Gage, Austin W. Pinney, together with two or three other members of the former Granite State Company. I was given an invitation to take a share in the newly formed company, but I declined, not being prepared to join another mining company at present.

The company immediately dispatched two of its men with mules to Sacramento to procure provisions and other necessary articles, in readiness for the rainy season which was expected within a month.

I was the owner of one mule which I forwarded to Sacramento by those men for sale for whatever price it might sell for. I received in return \$62.

On Sunday, October 21, S. W. Gage and Austin W. Pinney concluded they would leave the new company, and they with myself traveled up the river 8 miles to Bidwell's Bar, another mining camp, where we agreed to commence work the next morning on a dam for a company at \$6 per day each, board included.

On Monday morning we shouldered our blankets and walked to Bidwell's in season to perform three-fourths of a day's work. We also labored Tuesday and Wednesday.

As this was the first real manual labor performed by us for many months, and the weather being excessively warm and the work we were required to perform very laborious, it was not an easy matter for us to put in the time. We were just in from the mountains where the atmosphere was cool



and bracing, and the locality here was 108 on the river, surrounded by high hills and mountains, where the sun's rays fell unobstructed by any friendly shade trees. The labor was of the hardest kind. We were buiding a dam across Feather River for the purpose of turning the stream from its natural channel for a short distance, so the bed of the stream could be worked and the gravel washed to obtain whatever gold it might contain. At that time it was supposed to be large quantities.

The company for which we were at work consisted of about twenty members, who were at work with us. They were in haste to complete the dam before the rainy season should set in; consequently they worked more hours in a day than they otherwise would have done.

We were obliged to carry large rocks and loads of gravel, cobble stones, etc., from the shore to the dam on hand barrows, which was called by us "soul carting." After we had worked two and three-fourths days, Mr. Gage thought he could not endure it any longer, so we concluded to quit and commence mining on our own account and be independent.

Consequently we bought an old "cradle" for \$50, two tin pans for \$8, a pick and shovel, and commenced operations. Our cooking apparatus consisted of one tin kettle for which we paid \$4, a fry pan, a few knives and forks, three or four tin plates, some tin cups and a coffee pot, which we inherited from the old company.

For a shelter we had the broad canopy of heaven; and for a bed dry sand.

To us the mines presented a novel and interesting appearance. There were at this time no less than seventy-five 109 to one hundred mining cradles on Bidwell's Bar, with two or three men at work at each cradle.

The cradles were set along at the water's edge. The dirt was carried from the bank to the water in tin pans and poured into the upper part of the machine—or that part called the screen. This was a box about 15 inches square, with a sheet iron bottom perforated with holes about one-half inch in diameter.

A pan full of pay dirt was dug and turned into the screen and water poured upon it freely, while the cradle was rocked vigorously. This separated the coarse gravel and small stones from the sand, which passed to the bottom of the machine and was carried away by the water, while the gold being much heavier than the sand and gravel, was left at the bottom of the cradle.

The cradles were from three to four feet in length, with two or three bars across the bottom. The miners at this place were making from \$10 to \$30 a day, and a great majority were immigrants that had just come in over the country, and consequently were new hands at mining, each learning by experience the knack of separating the gold from the sand as best he could. We had endeavored to gain some information in regard to the process before we commenced here, but had not succeed farther than what knowledge we could acquire by watching others do the work, and imitating the process as far as possible.

Everything in the mines is quiet, and although traders and others leave large quantities of gold dust entirely exposed, there is said to be almost no thefts committed. Many of the traders are also miners, and very many have not even a tent in which to store their goods, and have no safe or bank to deposit it in—not even a trunk to place their gold in to keep it from the sight of those who are easily tempted, or are devoid of principle.

I have seen quantities of several thousand dollars worth of gold dust lying in full sight, while the owner at the same time would be away at work at the river, a quarter or a half mile away.

If a person is so unfortunate as to be taken seriously sick here it seems almost an impossibility for him to recover and regain his former strength. This probably is owing much more to the manner of living, and to the poor quality of food, than to the climate.

Scurvy is very prevalent among the land immigrants, and in this country at this time is one of the most serious diseases we have among us. To cure the scurvy requires a vegetable diet, which cannot be had at any price in the mines at the present time.

The flour is almost all musty, having been shipped around Cape Horn in the hold of a vessel; pork is rusty, as it is called, some of it nearly spoiled. Flour and pork are the two principal articles of diet.

Sometimes beef can be had and that is of the best quality. California beef is just as good as any. Physician's charges are exorbitant, fifty or a hundred dollars not being considered at all high for a professional visit. This is certainly a very hard country for a sick man. It is often said that if a man is taken sick here that he is no better than dead.

There are some cases of recovery, however. Many die of scurvy, of fevers of different kinds, and other 111 diseases. The sudden changes of climate probably may cause considerable sickness.

For the last two or three weeks before entering the valley, we had cool weather with frosty nights, being in the mountains at a high altitude, but here, although the nights are cool and very pleasant, the days are so very warm that the thermometer stands at 100° in the shade. Many whose food was largely salted provisions during the journey across the plains from Missouri to Sacramento valley, got their systems impregnated with salt and grease, and so became easy victims to the scurvy.

The miners generally appear to be in excellent spirits, and seem to enjoy life as well as the circumstances of their conditions will admit. A few of them have tents, some have brush shanties, but by far the larger portion camp in the open air, or under friendly trees, where they have a good opportunity to study astronomy after they lie down, by watching the moon and the stars. It is said by many, and it seems to be true, that for the moon to shine in a person's face while sleeping, is very injurious to the eyes. I have known some cases where persons have become almost blind, with no other good reason assigned. I believe it to be a safe plan for all persons who are accustomed to sleeping in the open air to always shade their face from the moon. From my own experience, I believe I have suffered with my eyes to a considerable degree from that cause. A person's eyes seem to become injured to a considerable extent before they are aware that anything wrong is taking place. What power, if any, the lunar rays have upon the human eye I am unprepared to explain.

The miners principally do their own cooking, and washing, if they have any done.

Their living is most commonly fried pork and flapjacks, or *flippers* as they are called, and fresh beef, which I believe is as good as any beef that can be found. One pound of this beef seems to be worth as much as several pounds of the miserable poor, cordy stuff that we called beef and ate for food on the journey to California. This is as fat and juicy as could be desired.

On Thursday, October 26, 1849, we commenced mining and set our cradle on the lower point of Bidwell's Bar, where we kept it running through the day, with the exception of a short time at noon.

As new miners we thought that the more and faster we washed the dirt, the more gold dust we should have to our credit at night, and consequently we kept the screen full all day and crowded it through as fast as it was possible. When night came we took it out of the cradle into a pan and tried to separate the black sand from the gold dust. But for us that was the most difficult operation of the whole process.

When we commenced we had nearly a pailful of the sand, and after a time we had succeeded in reducing it very materially in quantity, but could not separate the gold entirely from the sand, and consequently we were unable to ascertain the amount of gold that we had acquired for our day's work. However, we concluded that we were not doing as well as we desired and decided to look up another claim.

Our claim was at the extreme point of the Bar and

MINING SCENE. From an Old Print.

113 would soon run out, or become exhausted, as it is called by the miners.

The next morning we found a claim a short distance below on the opposite side of the river that had been worked for a considerable distance into the bank. There was an old rocker in the hole that was made from a tree, it having been dug out. Probably this was left here for the purpose of holding the claim if that should be desirable.

We learned that the men who had been working the claim had gone up the river and were engaged in building a log cabin.

We thought they were not entitled to hold a claim here and one in the mountains at the same time, so we moved the old machine out the hole where it would not trouble us and went to work.

We worked five days before we separated the gold from the black sand and did not know how well we were doing, but on making the separation we found we had averaged very nearly one ounce each per day, with which we were fairly well satisfied as a beginning.

Could we have continued indefinitely to make as good pay, it would have been better than we had dared to hope. The weather continued warm and dry until Tuesday, October 30, when it became cloudy and presented a very strong appearance of rain.

It did not storm, however, before night, when the rain began to descend and it continued to fall nearly all night. This was not very agreeable to us as we were sleeping without shelter on the ground, which soon began to grow damp and cold. Our situation was no worse than 114 that of hundreds of others who were caught in a similar condition.

Very few of the miners had any shelter and the best equipped had nothing but tents. A few days previous we had been warned by an old Californian that when the rainy season should begin the rain would descend in torrents. He said the miners were sure to be caught in a bad and unfortunate situation.

The first shower of the rainy season might be expected to continue for about four weeks. We afterwards learned to our sorrow that his statement was nearly correct.

The rain commenced on the evening of the 30th day of October, and until November 21st it rained more or less 19 days out of the 23. The greater part of the time it was so very wet that it was useless to undertake to work.

The river was swollen to such an extent that the bars along its shores were covered with water and could not be worked. The natural roads down the valley to Sacramento City became so very soft and muddy that pack mules could not travel them with packs, and provisions were boated up the river as far as possible, and then carried upon the miners' backs.

The limited stock of provisions in the mines at the beginning of the rainy season was soon exhausted, and consequently food soon became very scarce and extremely high. Flour advanced from 40 cents to \$1.50 per pound, and much of it that was sold at that exorbitant price was so badly hurt that it required the use of a hatchet to cut it in pieces to remove it from the barrel. 115 Other provisions became equally as expensive in proportion, and were difficult to procure at any price.

When the rainy season commenced a great number began to prepare some protection or shelter. Some built themselves small cloth or canvas tents, others constructed small log huts, while a few dug holes in the ground and covered them over Indian fashion. Not a few left the mines for the city, where provisions could be had at a lower price. Gage, Pinney and myself, when the rains commenced, procured a shelter in a large tent that belonged to some New Yorkers, and which stood near where we had been camping.

We paid two dollars each per week for the privilege of sleeping in the tent, and found our own blankets, and we considered ourselves very fortunate in obtaining so good a shelter.

About the 10th of November, Mr. Gage being somewhat indisposed, left us and went down and joined the Pelham company, about two miles above Long's Bar. They were engaged in building a log cabin and making other preparations for the long rainy season. Pinney and myself bought a claim in the bank of the river, for which we paid \$40. It had formerly been quite productive, but had been worked back into the bank considerably. We found it to be very little, if any better, than our old claim where we began mining.

From the 30th of October to the 21st of November we labored as much as the state of the weather and the high stage of the water would admit, but owing to the large proportion of rainy weather

and the many other discouragements under which we labored, and also to 116 the high prices of provisions, we could no more than earn our expenses, and we were doing far better than the average of the miners about Bidwell's at that time. Finally we concluded to leave the mines, for a time at least, to explore the valley and see if we could find anything to do. Accordingly we started on the afternoon of the 22nd of November and traveled down the river about 13 miles to Mayhew's ranch, or rather tent, near the foothills.

Here we tried to procure something for supper, but all that could be bought in the line of provisions of any kind was some raw venison.

We started a fire under a tree and roasted our meat on a forked stick, and ate it without salt. This we found quite dry and not the best of living, but it was the best, and all, that our money would buy, consequently we were compelled to make the best of it. We slept under a large oak tree, and in the morning roasted and ate some more of our venison, after which we proceeded on our way down the valley.

After traveling about ten miles we came to the ranch of Charles H. Burch, where we found a boat ready to leave for Sacramento City early the next morning, and we concluded to engage a passage for that place. However, upon making application, we learned that the seats were all engaged. The boat was owned by Mr. Burch and was only a whaleboat which would seat about twenty persons.

Thomas D. Bonner was captain. Captain Bonner was formerly president of the New Hampshire Temperance Society, but had resided in Massachusetts. Some time 117 previous to his embarkation for California he was said to be quite a poet in his way and composed many of the songs used at the temperance meetings, etc. He was formerly, according to his own account of his previous life, a real street drunkard—a mere sot. He called himself a reformed drunkard now.

After learning that we could not procure passage aboard the boat, we thought we would construct a raft on which we could float to Sacramento at our leisure.

However, we could not find any suitable timber with which to build a raft, and further, Mr. Burch said he was well acquainted with the river between here and Sacramento, and that he should advise no person to attempt to make the passage on a raft—that by doing so they most probably would lose their lives, unless they were good swimmers. He had known of two or three parties that had attempted it, but all were shipwrecked and lost all they had with them. He said the river was full of snags and sand bars, and that it was as much as he could do to pilot a good boat through safely.

His graphic account of the river below exploded our calculations in regard to attempting a passage by raft to the city. At this time it was almost impossible to travel to Sacramento by land, the road being very muddy with numerous slough crossings, which were full of water with neither bridges nor ferries. At some places the Sacramento had already overflowed its low bottom lands.

Burch was an old Californian who came to Oregon by way of the overland route in 1842 or 1843. He remained in that territory two or three years, when he came to California, then Mexico, and had since resided here, where he was in the army of Col. John C. Fremont in the Mexican war, 1847. He was formerly from Maryland and has no family. He was rough in his address and extremely profane.

He had taken a claim on the bank of Feather River, upon which he was intending to construct a house the following winter. He made a proposition to give us employment until he should complete his house at a salary of \$4.50 each per day and board.

This, considering the high prices of provisions, and the large proportion of wet weather, was as well as we would be likely to do at that time, and consequently we agreed to work for him until such time as we could do better, or as long a time as we all should be satisfied.

Mr. Burch contemplated the construction of a house by putting hewn posts into the ground and nailing on to them weather boards which were riven from oak logs.



A house of this kind would not answer a very good purpose in a cold climate, but was tight enough to be free from leakage and would be a very good shelter for California.

This point was about twenty miles above the junction of the Feather and Yuba rivers, and 80 or 90 miles above the mouth of the Feather, where it intersects the Sacramento River. The surrounding country was nearly level, and was covered with a growth of large, scattering, branching oak trees. The soil was of a sandy nature, and was not as fertile as it was in some other localities. Some of the oak trees were very large but were low and branching.

119

I measured one that was eleven feet in diameter near the ground—"a sturdy old oak" surely, that had stood the storms, the winds and the fires of many centuries.

A little farther away from the river the soil was more of a clayey nature and there was considerable live oak growth. Some of the soil was red—a kind of red clay—and seemed to New Hampshire people as being almost worthless for cultivation.

The live oak was small and scrubby, an evergreen almost worthless for timber.

The white oak produces large quantities of acorns which made good, nourishing food for swine. Fremont, I believe, stated that he had seen acorns grown from a single tree to cover the ground under its branches four inches in thickness. This I believe to be an exaggeration in keeping with many others made by that illustrious pathfinder.

Mr. Pinney and myself commenced work for Mr. C. H. Burch on Monday, November 26. A few days later, James M. Butler, one of our party of Pelham boys, came down from the mines in search of employment, and engaged himself to work for Mr. Burch, commencing to work with us at a uniform salary.

Robert Thom, another of our Pelham friends, was at this time working for his board about one mile up the valley from the Burch ranch at a place known as the "Hole in the Ground." This resort

derived its name from the fact that it was a mere hole excavated in the ground and covered with mud, etc., so as to shed the rain. It was owned by a fellow known as "Ned," and 120 one or two others, all from Sidney. It was conducted as a tavern or a stopping place for travelers.

Mr. Thom was expected to get and prepare wood, cook, and do other work. We went up to visit him one evening and gave him an invitation to go to work with us at \$4.50, as Mr. Burch desired to employ one more man, for a few weeks at least.

To this proposition Robert replied, that in all probability Mr. Burch would not have work for a man much more than one month, and in case he should begin work for him, he was afraid he would lose his place with Ned. He said his labor was not very hard and he thought he would remain for the present and make sure of his board.

It seemed to me that if a man was afraid of losing his place when he was at work for his board only in California, he certainly could have very little ambition. I thought he had better have remained at home with his family, and saved the long and tedious journey across the plains; but he was firm and decided and remained there until spring.

Mr. Burch desired to contract a ditch to be dug to enclose a field containing ten acres on the river bank, and Pinney contracted to do the work at the price of two dollars per rod, with the understanding that Mr. Burch should board him, and that the ditch should be four feet deep and four feet wide at the top and twenty inches wide at the bottom, and that it was not to be commenced until we had finished the other job. About 120 rods of ditch were to be dug. After Pinney had made the contract to dig the ditch he thought the price was too low 121 and he wished me to promise to do a part of it. I thought as he did, that the price was low for excavating so large a ditch, but I promised to help him to do it, and also Mr. Butler desired to do a portion of it.

After working for Mr. Burch about three weeks, he asked us to go to Sacramento with his boat after a load of provisions, for which he agreed to pay us five dollars per day each.

## CHAPTER VI

### ADVENTURES BY FLOOD.

We started down the river on the 22nd of December. Our crew consisted of Thomas D. Bonner, captain, Austin W. Pinney and myself. We carried down two or three passengers. The river being very much swollen by the recent heavy rains, we went down the river as far as Fremont the first day.

Fremont is a small town named for the "Pathfinder" and is situated on the west bank of the Sacramento River at its junction with Feather River.

We remained at Fremont until the morning of the 23rd, when we again started and reached Sacramento City before night.

By the way of the crooked river it is about 150 miles from the Burch ranch to the "cloth city," as it was then called. Pinney was employed by Mr. Burch as clerk to purchase the goods, and consequently I had very little to do while at Sacramento. We remained at the city during Monday and Tuesday. Pinney in the meantime made his purchases, and on Wednesday we were prepared to start for Feather River with our cargo of stores and provisions, liquors, etc.

Sacramento City at this time was built principally of cloth houses and tents. However, there were a few very fair framed buildings and numerous smaller shanties.

123

It was generally known as the "Rag City," which was an appropriate name indeed. Almost all the better class of buildings in the city were occupied as gambling places, drinking saloons, or something equally as bad.

Sacramento City is situated at the junction of the Sacramento and American Rivers, and near Sutter's old fort, on land originally granted to Captain Sutter by the Mexican government. The

location of the city is low and subject to inundations at extreme high water. Large steam vessels ply between this city and San Francisco. The fare is from thirty to forty dollars.

Sacramento City is at the head of ship navigation on the Sacramento, but small vessels can go above.

In the spring of 1849 this place began to be boomed as a city and now it contains several thousand inhabitants, and is a smart business place. Everything here is life and bustle, where fortunes are made in a day and are lost as quickly. A large amount of sickness prevails at the present time.

Dr. Haines and C. S. Fifield, who left us on Raft River, are both in the city at the present time. Fifield has a paint shop and is doing a good business. Dr. Haines has a small hospital for the sick and seems to be doing a considerable business and says he is making money.

Mr. Woodbury, who was a member of the Granite State Company from New Hampshire, is with Dr. Haines, and is very sick. He was taken with the diarrhoea soon after he entered the valley and has since continually been growing worse.

124

He knew me very readily when I entered his room, and taking me by the hand, said with tears in his eyes, that he should never again see his home or his friends. I tried in vain to cheer him, telling him that there still was hope for his recovery, but it was all of no avail. He said he should live but a few days, and his prediction proved too true. Poor fellow! A wife and family in New Hampshire waited in vain for his return home.

While in Sacramento I also saw a Mr. A. Webster, with whom I became acquainted before I left Hudson. He was sick with the scurvy, and unable to perform any labor. He was selling cakes on the levee. I thought that his existence, too, would soon terminate, but I never after heard from him. Probably he sleeps, with the many thousands of gold hunters, on the banks of the Sacramento—the sleep that knows no waking.

Instances of a similar description are almost daily met with in California. Men who left their homes and friends in the East to take their chances in the mines, if possible, to gain a few paltry dollars in the New Eldorado, are stricken by disease, and death soon ends their earthly career. It seems truly hard to die in California among strangers, with no friends near to sympathize and in some small degree, alleviate the pains of their dying moments.

On Wednesday, December 26, we left Sacramento City and started on our journey for Feather River. Our boat was loaded down with provisions, liquors and other articles. Thomas D. Bonner was captain, A. W. Pinney and myself constituted the crew, and we had two passengers aboard—a North Carolinian by the name of 125 Stedman, (who by the way agreed to work his passage up the river), and a physician from Nova Scotia.

The North Carolina man seemed to be somewhat bigoted and wanted the best accommodations the boat afforded, and while we were making our way up the river he never offered to pull an oar or do anything to assist us in the least, but always kept the best seat aboard the boat dry from morning until night by sitting upon it steadily with an India rubber blanket over him when it rained, which was a considerable part of the time. This did not appeal to me as being the proper manner for him “to work his passage” up the river, as the stream was high with a rapid current. With a heavily loaded boat it was quite difficult for two men to make any progress with their oars against the strong current. As Captain Bonner failed to remind Mr. Stedman about his agreement to work his passage up the river, I thought I would take the risk to jog his memory in relation to it. The result was instantaneous and Mr. Stedman and I had a falling out immediately. He was quite excited and seemed to be on the point of explosion. I certainly anticipated an immediate challenge from Mr. Stedman to meet him in deadly combat and settle the matter Southern fashion. But for some unknown cause he suffered me to continue to live. Had a challenge been forthcoming I cannot now say what the outcome would have been.

The Sacramento was very high, almost at full banks, and having had a head wind, we made very slow progress. At some points along the river the banks were overflowed and the valley for miles in extent back from the river was one wide sheet of water, extending as far as the eye 126 could

reach. The valley of the Sacramento is nearly level and extends from the river to the Sierra Nevada mountains on the east, and to the coast range on the west, and at some points it is fifty or sixty miles wide.

Pinney and myself pulled the boat up the river against the wind and current, Captain Bonner sitting in the stern and steering her, while Mr. Stedman and the doctor made themselves as comfortable as was possible under the circumstances.

We had three barrels of liquors, brandy and whiskey, aboard and soon after we began to ascend the river, Captain Bonner, president of the New Hampshire Temperance society, and late a noted temperance lecturer, notwithstanding, tapped one of the whiskey barrels and commenced drinking the contents. This movement on his part somewhat surprised me, although I had began to learn not to be easily surprised at the acts of men in California. But I had heard Captain Bonner say much in favor of temperance and I supposed he would be among the last to taste of whiskey.

At first he drank a little, and after a short time he took a little more, and he continued to take a little quite often and said he could not live in California without it. He said that he had once been a hard drinker, and I was afraid that he was in great danger of falling into his former evil practices.

He argued that it was impossible for him to live without it in California. It had once saved his life, but that if he should return to his home in the East, he would again be as strong an advocate of temperance as formerly. How this proved I cannot say, but while I knew 127 him in California after I was with him on this trip, he appeared to be one of the most confirmed hard drinking men that came within the circle of my acquaintance.

To pull the heavily loaded boat against the current we found to be very hard work and the progress was quite slow. We had made our way up the Sacramento a considerable distance, when one day, owing to the head wind being so very strong, we could make little or no headway; we were compelled to tie up and remain nearly the whole day.

This was at a point where several choppers were at work cutting wood for the Sacramento market. They were paid eight dollars per cord for cutting it and were not required to split it. This I thought would be a good job, and that if Mr. Pinney would hire another man in my place to help pull the boat up the river, I would stay and cut wood for a while. I promised Mr. Burch my wages for the time I had been on the trip, thinking he could find no fault with that arrangement. Mr. Pinney thought I was under obligation to him to help dig the ditch for Mr. Burch and said that if I stopped here he should do the same.

I knew that such an arrangement would not be fair treatment to Mr. Burch. Mr. Pinney had a settlement to make with him in regard to the purchases made and the funds remaining in his hands. He also had contracted to excavate about 120 rods of ditch. I had consented to dig a part of it and would not refuse to do it without his full consent. Still I thought he might release me. Under the circumstances I continued to go up the river with the boat.

128

On the 5th day of January, 1850, we reached a point on the river about twelve miles below Burch's ranch, where we were met by Mr. Burch, who concluded to go with us up the river in the boat. Our passengers left us here and started on foot toward the mines.

After meeting Mr. Burch we proceeded toward our destination and on the night of January 7th reached a point not more than one and one-half miles below Burch's. Two or three days previous we had fallen in with another boat and party bound up the river, laden with provisions, owned and manned by some men from the Pine Tree state. They were two brothers by the name of Frye, Jack Percy, and a man working for them.

On the night of the 7th we all camped on the bank of the river almost within sight of home—"Our California Home"—but on the opposite side of the river. The night was dark and stormy and the rain descended in torrents, with the wind blowing almost a gale from the south. After several fruitless attempts we succeeded in starting a fire, by which we cooked some pork and flapjacks.

On the morning of January 8th it still rained as hard as on the night previous. We started on our journey as early as it became sufficiently light to see how to arrange our camp fixtures properly. We did not even remain to prepare any breakfast, but started with the expectation of reaching Burch's ranch before noon. We were not long in reaching the foot of the rapids in company with the Maine boat.

We had aboard a long rope and we concluded it would be the better plan for all hands to pull one boat up by the willow brush that grew along the water's edge a

SACRAMENTO CITY IN 1850.

129 rope's length, and then draw the other boat up by means of the rope.

The river being high and there being a strong head wind blowing for us to contend with, together with the fall in the stream at this place, we found it to be a slow and very tedious process to pull a heavily loaded boat up the river by the willows that skirted the shore. We would first pull up one boat a rope's length, and then draw the other boat after it, and thus we labored incessantly until at length we succeeded in getting both boats near the head of the rapids, when by some unfortunate mishap, the boat got into the stream beyond the reach of the willows, and before we could recover we were again at the foot of the rapids and the other boat was also with us. To pull her up again was the hard labor of two or three hours, but it seemed to be the only practical plan that we could pursue.

Consequently, we all worked with a will and at length succeeded in pulling her up the second time, arriving at a point a little higher up the stream than we reached at the first time. We were pulling the other boat up after us by the rope and holding our boat to the brush, when suddenly the brush gave way and very soon both boats were again at the foot of the rapids.

These repeated accidents and disappointments, considering all the existing circumstances and conditions, were anything but comforting to our empty stomachs and wet backs. It was now getting toward the end of the day and we had tasted no food since the night previous.



The rain had descended in torrents all day and we were cold and wet, but to pull the boat again to the head of 130 the rapids before dark seemed to be our only alternative. Could we succeed in getting our boat safely over the rapids by daylight, we could soon reach our destination, and we were anticipating a warm supper and dry lodgings in Burch's tent.

Consequently, we once more, for the third time, worked our way by the brush to the head of the long rapids, and just as it was becoming dark we had succeeded in bringing both boats to the head of the rapids for the third time. Just at that point of the river there was a short bend in the stream so that we would get the benefit of a fair wind from that point up. Pinney was in the bow of the boat holding to the brush, Captain Bonner and Burch were near the stern arranging to get under weigh, and I was hoisting the sail.

Mr. Burch said: "Be sure to hold fast this time, Pinney." But for the moment the latter seemed absent-minded and before I had the sail raised he released his hold upon the brush and seized the foot of the mast to enter it into its place. Instantly we were again beyond the reach of the brush, and very quickly were again at the foot of the rapids! Our companion boat continued up the river without trouble, so far as we knew.

To work our way up again to the head of the rapids that night seemed to be an impossibility. It had become extremely dark. The rain continued to descend copiously, as it had done continuously for more than twenty-four hours. The river was so full of snags that to make the attempt to cross it in the dark was to hazard our lives.

We were on the opposite side from Mr. Burch's ranch, 131 and also on the opposite side from another ranch owned and occupied by a Frenchman, John Ruells. On the side where we were there were no habitations within twelve or fifteen miles. After a consultation we came to the conclusion that the best we could do, under the existing circumstances, was to land and await until the next morning.

Accordingly, we pulled our boat as far into the willows as it were possible, and I, being at the bow, chained the boat to a small tree. I thought it was probable that considering the large quantity of rain that had fallen the stream would continue to rise some during the night, and to guard against accidents I chained the boat about three feet above the water and gave it about twelve feet of spare chain.

The small willows were extremely dense, and in making an attempt to reach the shore, I found the water at the bow of the boat was five feet deep. As we had no dry matches and there was no possibility of procuring any fire, we concluded our condition would probably be nearly or quite as comfortable aboard the boat during the night, as it would be if we could succeed in reaching the bank. Consequently, we concluded to remain on board, though we had nothing cooked that we could eat and we were cold and wet.

The rain was still descending and I believe that in all my life I never laid down to a night's lodging with so small a prospect of the enjoyment of a moment's comfortable rest and repose as on that night. The rain, although it was from the south, was cold, and each one of us shivered so badly that the boat fairly quivered from stem to stern!

132

I covered my head and after enduring the situation for some hours, fell into a broken, dreamy slumber, from which I was suddenly awakened with the cold water rushing over me. I jumped to my feet immediately and simultaneously with the whole crew. But we had no sooner gained our feet than the boat went under, sending us all with our load of freight into the river! The boat immediately after came to the surface with its keel upward.

The first thought that occurred to me was to immediately strike out and swim to the shore, but my second thought was to get upon the bottom of the boat and get, if possible, a survey of my situation.

Consequently I pulled myself up upon the upturned boat. At about that time Mr. Burch cried out: "For God's sake pull me up or I shall drown." I took him by the hand and drew him up. He said

he could not swim a single stroke. Captain Bonner, who had sometime been a sailor, attempted to swim.

He wore his “sou-wester,” a canvas hat painted white. In the darkness I could just trace the white hat as it slowly moved along the surface of the water, but it soon disappeared from sight and then it reappeared. It almost immediately disappeared the second time when I reached for one of the oars that was within sight to try and reach him, if possible. Again he came to the surface and climbed up a small tree that was standing in the water near the upturned boat. He climbed as far up the tree as he could, it being the top of a small willow. His feet were about four feet above the surface of the 133 water. No sooner had he gained his position on the tree, than he said he came very near drowning.

To all appearance our position since we chained the boat to a tree the night previous had been transformed. The rain had ceased to pour, clouds were beginning to become broken, and the darkness was not so dense. We could dimly discern on our side the waters of the river rushing swiftly past, gurgling and whirling, carrying along with them large masses of flood wood, intermixed with immense logs and whole trees, while on the other hand we could discover small trees and brush rising above the surface of the water, and still a little farther in the distance was a large growth of cottonwood trees. The latter were probably some twelve or fifteen rods distant to the east of our position. We could see no land.

The question of what was the immediate cause of this severe accident soon began to be discussed among the party. Mr. Burch made the inquiry who it was that chained the boat. I answered that it was I who chained it. He thought that it was not fastened sufficiently secure and that it probably came unhooked, floated down the river and in some way became capsized. The same opinion at first seemed to be entertained by the majority of the party. However, I knew it had been faithfully secured and that it was almost an impossibility for it to have become loosened.

It occurred to me that the boat was still chained to the willow tree as we had left it when we had laid down, and that the river had risen to such a height that the bow of the boat had been drawn

beneath the surface and it naturally capsized. This seemed almost an impossibility, but it proved ultimately to be the true version of the cause of the accident.

After I had considered the matter as to the safest and best course to pursue, I concluded to stay by the wreck as long as it seemed possible, and the entire crew seemed to be of the same mind.

We soon began crying for help at the top of our voices, but at the same time we were without the slightest hope or expectation that anyone could render us any assistance on that night.

First one would cry aloud for a few moments and then another would take it up for a time, and thus it would go around through the whole list.

The day previous Captain Bonner had a two-quart jug aboard which he had drawn nearly full of whiskey for his own private use, and when he discovered the "little brown jug" resting against the tree beneath his feet, he was very much pleased. He soon recovered it and after taking a drink from it, passed it around. It was about one-half full when recovered and it went around at intervals the remainder of the night.

We were compelled to sit in the cold water nearly to our waists, from the time of the accident until daylight, and it was not anything like a comfortable position. As near as we were able to judge, the boat upset about one o'clock.

Occasionally we heard a voice in reply to ours, but no one came to our assistance until it became daylight, when an Italian came in sight around the bend in the river in a small zinc boat and took us ashore. Captain Bonner had nearly perished.

135

Before we were rescued the water had reached to his waist, as he stood upon the tree, and he could ascend no higher. Mr. Burch and Captain Bonner both said that they never expected to see another day, and they would have it no other way from the moment of the accident until the rescue.

Mr. Burch stated and several times repeated it, that he would willingly give all he possessed in the world to be set on shore. I made the reply that I would pay fifty dollars to any one to put me ashore safely, but that was the extent I would give.

After getting ashore I found my limbs so benumbed that it was with great difficulty that I could walk a step.

About ten o'clock we partook of a little breakfast that had been prepared for us, it being the first of anything we had eaten for upward of forty hours. On an investigation a little later we found the river had risen about twenty-five feet during the night, occasioned from the heavy rains together with the melting of large bodies of snow in the Sierra Nevada mountains.

After two days' rest we all felt nearly or quite as well as if nothing had befallen us, and strange as it may seem, not one of the party even caught the slightest cold from all the exposure.

The night of the 8th of January, 1850, will probably be long remembered by all of this little party of four men.

At that time the great freshet and overflow at Sacramento City was experienced, which destroyed an enormous amount of property and caused so great an amount 136 of sickness, suffering and death—when it was said the population of the city decreased about three-fourths in the space of six weeks, owing to deaths from cholera, fevers and others diseases, and from immigration to other places.

137

## **CHAPER VII.**

### **LIFE IN THE MINES.**

After a lapse of 44 years—January, 1894—I resumed this narrative.

The foregoing was written not long after the events therein written had transpired, from notes taken from day to day. All those events were then fresh in my memory.

Such notes as I took subsequent to the 9th of January, 1850, while I remained in California, and later while I was in Oregon, were not so copious and full, and what I may hereafter write in relation to my experiences in those states (then territories) for the next four years and more will be drawn from these scanty notes, with the assistance of a very retentive memory.

At the date of the sad experience with the boat on the Feather River, January 9, 1850, I was a young man of a little more than twenty-one years of age; while at this time I am more than sixty-five, yet my memory is still quite fresh in regard to many of those events that transpired in those times, while I doubt not that many others of equal interest may have been forgotten altogether; or I may retain only a partial or faint recollection of them at this time.

In consequence of this, whatever I may write in the following pages will be such only as I distinctly remember, and they will be a few of the leading incidents connected with my residence in California and Oregon until August, 1854, when I returned to New Hampshire.

After a rest of two days from January 9, 1850, the time of the accident with the boat, we again resumed work with Mr. Burch, and soon after commenced the excavation of the ditch, which was for the purpose of a fence on three sides of a field of ten acres, Feather River to form the boundary on the remaining side. The land was sandy and free from stones, and the shoveling excellent. We made a very good job, as by hard work we could each excavate four or five rods a day. The weather at this time was pleasant. The rainy season had not entirely passed, but February was a fine month and very agreeable.

After the ditch was completed, as Mr. Burch had no more work for us, we traveled down the river to Yuba City, a small, new village on the west bank of the Feather River, opposite the mouth of the Yuba River.

At that time Marysville, situated on the other side of Feather River and a short distance up the Yuba, was composed of very few buildings, with the exception of Nye's ranch, which was one of the old California adobe ranches. This was substantially at the head of steam navigation on Feather River, and there was quite a rivalry between the two "cities"—each trying to become *the* "city."

Yuba City had the first beginning, but Marysville later outrivalled her and became the more important place. At this time two or three small steamers plied between Sacramento, Yuba City and Marysville. The largest of these was a flat-bottomed boat of considerable size, which, 139 if I remember correctly, was the *Vezie*. It was owned by a company from Maine, called the *Vezie Company*, and was built in Maine, taken around Cape Horn on a vessel, and set up in California. I believe Captain, Colonel or General *Vezie* was at the head of the company.

Green oak wood was used for fuel to operate the steamboat, and as there was quite a number of men present, members and stockholders of the company, a small board shanty was erected a short distance below Yuba City for the accommodation of the choppers who undertook to cut the fuel for the steamer from the oaks that grew near by.

The majority of these men were young and were entirely unused to such hard manual labor as chopping, and the outcome was that eight or ten of them could not, or did not, cut a sufficient amount of wood to supply the boat with fuel.

Shortly after our arrival at Yuba City, I met the agent of the steamboat company and made an agreement with him to cut 100 cords of wood at \$6.50 per cord.

The wood was to be cut three feet in length and split, but no deduction was to be made on account of its short length. I informed Pinney and Butler of the contract I had entered into, and of course they expected to take part in the job.

Mr. Pinney was a native of Vermont, and cutting cord wood had been his principal work for many years.

For several years previous to his immigration to California he had resided in Pelham, and had cut wood for about nine months in each year, being engaged at haying 140 and other work for the farmers during the heated term of summer. He was noted in Pelham as being an expert chopper, one that could cut more wood in a given time than any other man known in or about Pelham. Mr. Butler and myself both knew how to use the axe, but had never cut very much cord wood.

Mr. Pinney made the remark that in all probability he would cut as much wood as Mr. Butler and myself together. I made the reply, that if he should cut twice as much wood as I did, I would leave the job.

A ferry spanned the river from this place to the Marysville side, and the fare for foot passengers was fifty cents each way.

No axes were on sale in Yuba City, and Mr. Pinney was selected to go to Marysville and purchase three chopping axes. In due time he returned with the axes—three being the entire stock found in the market in Marysville.

As I remember, the price paid was ten dollars each, without helves. One of them was about the ordinary size and weight for a chopping axe, while another was a large, heavy one, and the third light and small like a boy's axe. Mr. Pinney selected the one of medium size for himself, and said that Mr. Butler and I could make such arrangements as we should choose in regard to the other two. I gave Mr. Butler his choice and he took the heavy one. We made arrangements with a man by the name of Galushia, who had a tent, to supply us with board at the price of two dollars per day. He did the cooking over a fire outside the tent.

We each made a helve and hung the axes and began chopping. The wood was the white oak species and was 141 growing a short distance back from the river. The trees were principally large, very old and brash, not very tall but with numerous large branches spreading over a wide surface. The trees were scattering, with no underbrush, "oak openings." It was seldom that we cut the trunks of the



trees into wood, but left them on the ground, making use of the branches only. In many instances we would climb the trees and cut off the branches and leave the trunk standing.

The first of my work at chopping caused my hands to blister badly. It was late in the forenoon when I commenced, and when it became night I felt an anxiety to know about how much I had succeeded in cutting. I piled and measured it, when I found I had cut in the short day, one and one-quarter cords, or had earned over eight dollars.

By the agreement made we were not required to pile the wood, but the company was to have it drawn out and piled on the bank of the river, where it could be measured.

We were not a long time in completing the contract of cutting one hundred cords, and we made another contract to cut another hundred cords. Each of us had our wood kept separate and piled by itself. Some days, when I was fortunate in the selection of a good tree, I would cut as much as four cords; while on some other days, when I had a bad tree, I would not cut more than two cords. The first week or ten days of chopping caused my hands to become very sore, so much so that the helve of the axe would be covered with blood when they came in contact with it.

142

### **MARCH 1, 1850.**

After having worked at chopping about one month and having had our wood drawn out and measured, it was found I had cut almost two-thirds as much as had Mr. Pinney, and Mr. Butler had cut about one-half as much.

As spring was approaching and as gold mining was our chief object and uppermost in our minds as a means by which to make a fortune in California, we thought the time was near at hand when we should select a mining claim for the coming summer.

At that time it was almost the universal opinion among the miners of California that the beds of the rivers and large streams must be very rich with gold dust. That to turn the water from its natural

channel so as to be able to work out the gravel from the bed of the stream, a quick fortune was almost sure to result.

The mines had been worked for a comparatively short time, and this plan had not been tested in only a few instances. The theory was that as gold was found in greater or lesser quantities along the shores of nearly all the streams, in almost every bar, and in paying quantities in a great number of them, if the river bed could be worked there would be necessarily large deposits of the yellow metal, as owing to its great specific gravity it would naturally seek the lowest levels and there remain.

The rivers in the mountains were a succession of falls and rapids, and at many such places it was practical to construct temporary dams, so as to turn the streams from their channels for a greater or lesser distance.

## 143

Almost the entire mining population of Feather River in the spring of 1850 was engaged in enterprises of this nature. Many had selected their mining claims in the autumn previous or in the early winter, and had worked upon them during the winter in making preparations to carry their project into execution as early in the spring as the water should become low enough to permit of its being successfully carried out. The Pelham company owned a claim on the south fork of Feather River, where they had built and were occupying a comfortable log-house, and had expended much time and labor in making the necessary preparations.

They bought a pitsaw with which they sawed sufficient plank for the construction of a long flume to carry the water a considerable distance. In appearance it was one of the most promising gold claims in the mountains. It was almost certain that for each one of the company there was a fortune awaiting in the bed of the stream.

Numerous similar companies were constructing improvements of greater or lesser magnitude. Everybody seemed sanguine of success.

We were doing fairly well at cutting wood and could continue to cut for the Vezie Company at six dollars per short cord. We could earn on the average, including some rainy weather, twelve or fifteen dollars a day.

But we naturally reasoned something different. If our friends in the mines should *strike it rich* and succeed in making a moderate fortune in a few months and we should spend our time cutting wood when we had the opportunity of securing a claim at some place along the 144 river, perhaps equally as rich as others, we should regret that we did not attend to it at the opportune time.

After discussing the matter in many different aspects, it was decided by us that Mr. Pinney would remain and cut wood, while Mr. Butler and myself would go up the river into the mountains and endeavor to secure a claim.

Consequently, we left Yuba City and went up the Feather River into the mining country. After prospecting for several days, we succeeded in securing a claim on the middle fork of Feather River, nearly thirty miles above Bidwell's.

At this time large quantities of snow still remained in the mountains above Bidwell's Bar. We made sufficient arrangements to comply with the mining rules and regulations to hold the claim, and formed a company.

The names of all of this company I do not at this time recall, but at least there were two additional men that made the journey with us from Boston to California—Alden J. Nutting, of Westford, Mass., and Cyrus Whittemore, of Antrim, N.H.

The most promising claims had been selected and we made the best arrangements that seemed practical at that time.

The winter of 1849-50 was noted for the great amount of rain that fell in the valleys and the enormous depth of snow that accumulated in the mountains. It was not expected that the streams would become sufficiently low so as to admit of working our claim before June.

After making the arrangements to hold the claim we returned to Bidwell's and did some mining there and at a place on the middle fork of Feather River, about 15

POSTOFFICE IN '49.

145 miles from Bidwell's. The water being high our success was poor.

While at Yuba City I became acquainted with a man by the name of Damon. Capt. Robert D. Bonner went into trade then in company with another man and desired to hire some money at 10 per cent interest per month.

I loaned him a considerable sum, but unfortunately I never received from him any interest nor any part of the principal. I soon afterwards lost sight of him and never knew his fate. As he had become very dissipated probably he did not survive long.

Hay had sold at very high prices the winter previous, in some of the cities as high as \$500 per ton.

Mr. Damon of Yuba City made the proposition that we go up Feather River to a suitable place and there cut and stack a lot of hay and sell it later. He said he could not mow himself, but that he would hire a man to mow with me, and as he owned a horse, he would draw the hay together and pile it up, and we would sell it before the rainy season should set in.

I acquiesced in the proposition and we went up the river a few miles to a place where we found the grass was quite good. We bargained for the right to cut as much as we might desire for a nominal sum from a man that owned a ranch nearby. He was a squatter and probably had no more right to the grass than we had.

Mr. Damon owned one scythe and we succeeded in finding another—an old one—which we purchased for about fifty dollars. Mr. Damon hired Alden J. Nutting, before mentioned. Mr. Nutting was a short, thick set, 146 robust, muscular man, and seemed to be in the enjoyment of good health.

The grass grew on the river bottom and was the natural product of the soil. It stood quite thick and was a fair crop, but had been trampled by cattle that had ranged over it and fed upon it at will, which caused it to be slow and difficult mowing.

We commenced mowing on Monday morning and I continued mowing every day through the week until Saturday night. Mr. Nutting complained of being exhausted and quit work at Thursday noon, but resumed again on Friday morning. There was no dew there at the time and the hay remained in the swath as it fell from the scythe, where it cured perfectly.

The next week we pitched it together into small piles where we loaded it upon a wagon and formed it into a square pile on the ground in a broad, open field.

Rakes of any kind we did not use. We did some more mowing for Mr. Damon, as he would need some to feed to his horse.

Our stack of hay was about 40 feet long by 30 feet wide and ten or eleven feet high, and was estimated to contain twenty tons.

It is impossible at the present time, after the lapse of nearly forty-five years, to give from memory a *connected* account of *all* the transactions in which I was engaged during the spring, summer and fall of 1850. Consequently, I will write about events of which I find my original minutes, or others of which I still have a distinct memory, without regard to the exact dates or order in which they transpired. It is possible that some events 147 which I may relate may have taken place at a time previous to that of cutting the hay.

Some time I believe during that spring as Mr. Pinney and myself were returning from the mines on our way to Marysville, or Yuba City, we made a stop at Charles Burch's ranch, where we met a party of surveyors.

The engineer, Robert Elder, a Scotchman who had been employed for twelve years as an assistant engineer on the Michigan and Illinois canal, said to us that he was short of help and would like to employ us for a short time if our price was satisfactory.

Having no particular work in view, we set our price at eight dollars per day with board. Mr. Elder thought that was more than he could afford to pay for help that had had no experience at such work, but said we could go to work on trial for two or three days.

He was laying out a new city a short distance farther up the river, it being a mile square, or nearly so. He had then worked upon it for a few days. The survey was being done for a company in Sacramento City, who later erected one or two large buildings, and made considerable effort to get a city started, but at length it proved to be a "paper city," as has been the fate of numerous other like schemes in the West. We commenced work and after a few days were constantly expecting a notice of acquittal from Mr. Elder, or otherwise a reduction of wages. Nothing, however, was said by either party in regard to it for nearly two weeks, when I inquired of him how much longer he supposed our services would be needed. His reply was: "I would like to have *you* stay a good while.

148

Mr. Elder was a very kind man, yet he was somewhat eccentric, and his likes and dislikes very decided. Up to that time I had no reason to believe that he had any preference for me over Mr. Pinney.

We worked a few days after the time of the incident narrated, when one day he said to me that he would suspend work and go to Marysville for a few days and he desired us to go with him. We had boarded with an Englishman whom Mr. Elder had employed for that purpose, but he had lived at the ranch or house of a Frenchman by the name of John Roulo, located more than a mile down the river. Mr. Roulo had an Indian wife.

The Englishman was not a bad cook, but the principal diet for breakfast, dinner and supper the week through was stewed beef. This beef was of good quality and was very well cooked, but it did not agree with me for a constant diet, with scarcely any other kind of food.

About this time we went to Marysville, and Mr. Elder took a trip to Sacramento City to consult with some of the officers of the company for whom we were at work, or they came to Marysville, I am not certain which.

Mr. Elder desired me to remain and return with him. I made the proposition that I would do so upon the condition that I should board at the Frenchman's, where he did. I confessed I could not stand the Englishman's stewed beef any longer. He said I could just as well board at that place and might have done so if I had spoken about it to him. We returned and I worked until the job was finished. Mr. Pinney did not return with us.

There was in our party a Scotchman by the name of Campbell, one of the Sidney convicts. He was quite agreeable when he was sober, but sometimes he would get partially intoxicated, and then he was a bad man to get along with. He appeared to be a man of good education and understood surveying. Mr. Elder was obliged to be absent a part of the time, and in his absence he made Mr. Campbell his foreman.

Sometimes when he had indulged too freely of whiskey, he would neither work himself nor permit any one else. This did not suit me, as I intended to labor just as faithfully in the absence of Mr. Elder as I would if he were present.

One day when Mr. Campbell became quite drunk and foolish, and had allowed but very little work to be done by the party until afternoon, my patience had become exhausted. I undertook to drink from the waterpail that was standing nearby under a large tree, when he gave the pail a sharp tilt, which spilled some of the contents upon me. I started the second time to drink from the pail and he repeated the same foolish trick. After he had done this for several times, I dashed all the remaining water in the pail squarely into his face. He at once became almost frantic with rage, and seizing an

axe threatened to cut me in pieces. I kept myself a short distance beyond his reach, and laughed at his threats.

I knew it was an easy matter for me to keep beyond his reach, but I didn't know how long his anger would continue to rage, or whether he would revenge himself at some convenient time in the future when I might not be expecting it. After a short time he ordered me to go to the river near by and refill the pail with water, but he still held the axe in one hand and the pail in the other. 150 I invited him to put aside the axe and give me the pail, which he finally did, and I immediately complied with his request.

After Mr. Elder returned I spoke to him in relation to Mr. Campbell's actions, and he discharged him. The next winter I heard that he was lynched at some place in one of the mountain valleys for horse stealing.

One incident I always remembered which took place while we were employed on this job. When we were boarding at the French ranch, we carried a lunch for our dinners, which we would eat while seated under a large oak tree. One day we sat down in the shade of a large branching tree and ate our dinner and rested ourselves perhaps nearly an hour. Upon starting for our work we had gone but a short distance from the tree, where but a moment previous we had been quietly seated, when we heard a loud crash, and upon turning around we saw that a very large limb had broken from the tree and had fallen exactly upon the spot where we had been seated but a moment previous.

This branch at the point of breakage was more than a foot in diameter, and probably contained nearly a cord of wood. There was not a breath of wind stirring and the branch had broken from its own weight, being just fully leaved out. It seemed to me to be a very narrow escape from a serious accident. I afterwards learned from my own observation that it was very often that limbs broke from such trees when loaded with leaves and there was no wind stirring.

Mr. Elder seemed to manifest a deep interest in my welfare, and while he was drafting the plan of the survey 151 we had made, desired me to learn to use the portractor, scale and dividers.



At that time I had no intention of taking up the business of surveying, although from what little experience I had had with it, I thought I would like the work very much. I practiced with the instruments as I had the time to spare from my other work, and learned something about portracting and the use of the scale and dividers.

Later in the same season I assisted Mr. Elder in laying out another “paper city,” but it was not of so large extent as was the former one.

Not only was the winter of 1849-50 an excessive one in cold and storms, but the year 1850 was the most trying in the history of the gold-seekers. The struggles for the possession of titles to the claims staked out by the prospecting miners reached a critical stage; the cholera raged in every section of the Pacific slope—aye, spread from ocean to ocean—and in addition to these and the trials and uncertainties of life in the mines, where hundreds were losing to one making, the Indians started upon the warpath.

Early in the summer, while I was at work at Bidwell's on Feather River, I witnessed the interesting and somewhat startling spectacle of a band of her men decked out in all of the horrible panoply of savage warfare. All were elaborately painted in striking colors and armed in Indian fashion, bows and quivers, decorated in bright figures and filled with sharp pointed arrows tipped with glass heads, knives and other implements of a warlike nature.

## 152

These dusky forces were composed of the “Valley Indians,” as the native inhabitants of the lowlands were called, among whom was a branch known as the “Digger Indians,” and the mountain tribes that had their homes in the Sierra Nevadas and adjacent highlands. The last named tribes were at enmity with the first—a predatory warfare that existed for a long period—a war as it seemed to the bitter end.

An Indian village was situated twenty or twenty-five miles from Bidwell's easterly in the Sierras, which I had frequently passed through when I was prospecting in the Feather River gold mines.

One day about noon there suddenly appeared in this little mining settlement a file of naked Indian warriors, forty or fifty in number, nearly all young men in the vigor of manhood, all apparently sound, well developed, beautifully proportioned, athletic men, the leader the most conspicuous figure. They came into view traveling at a slow dog trot, single file, each at a uniform distance from his file leader. No word was uttered, and no one of them preceptibly turned his head to the right or to the left.

As the foremost reached the river, which at that place was deep and of considerable breadth, he stepped boldly and deliberately into the current without the slightest hesitation, and swam quickly to the opposite shore, where he again resumed the Indian trot of a few minutes before. Even the river did not break the line or check the speed materially, but the line was maintained and the speed was continued on and up the steep mountain incline as on the level, without break or hesitation, far, far up the rugged mountain trail as we could see, their military order and discipline unbroken.

They were from a valley tribe and had suddenly come into view, passed through the village, swam the river, climbed the mountain side, and passed beyond our view in silence, bent on their errand of bloody carnage and death. Determination, vengeance and savage destruction was pictured on every brow.

Something of vital moment to the aboriginal population not far distant was about to transpire. And it was not long delayed. It was learned a little later that the Indian village in the mountains before mentioned, was suddenly and sadly surprised on the night of the day that the war party passed through Bidwell's, and for the small Indian settlement it proved a great slaughter or massacre of the men, while a large number of the women and children were taken prisoners and conducted to new homes.

Some time in the spring, James M. Butler being somewhat out of health, went to the Pelham camp to do the cooking for the company, where he remained until late in the fall, when he returned to his home in Pelham.

I did some mining at Bidwell's and one or two other places while we were waiting for the water to subside. We visited our claim on the middle fork of Feather River several times, and made preparations to work it as soon as the state of the water would admit of doing it. We were obliged to convey all the provisions needed there on our backs over the mountains from Bidwell's Bar, a distance of 25 or 30 miles.

154

It was some time in July when the water became sufficiently low so as to admit of working the claim to advantage. At that time the companies that had taken claims in the most favorable locations had succeeded in getting a part of the water turned aside from the channel, so that they had begun to work some of the beds of the streams. A few of those who had succeeded in working any part of the river bed had found the claims rich, but a very large majority of such mines were only paying very moderately, and many were almost entirely worthless. Some companies that had been at work all winter making preparations to turn a stream from its bed, when at last they had succeeded at the cost of so much labor and expense, found the bed of the stream so poor that it would not pay the expense of working. This state of affairs was not encouraging for us. As yet we had expended but little labor on our claim, but in loss of time in making arrangements, going back and forth conveying provisions and tools, with the loss of time in waiting for the water to subside, all together made it a matter of considerable magnitude, reaching probably two or three thousand dollars. However, it was not our purpose to abandon our claim without a fair trial.

Instead of arranging to turn the whole stream at once, as we had originally intended, we concluded to construct a wing dam, so as to be able to test the paying qualities of the bed. If it should prove of such richness as to warrant it, we could then build the dam as we had planned and turn the whole stream. If it should prove of poor paying quality we would abandon it.

Consequently, we constructed a wing dam so as to 155 be able to turn the water from a small part of the river bed so as to permit of working so far as to be able to test the quality.

After completing this work, and washing the material from the river bed, we found but very little gold, not sufficient to pay for working.

I would probably have had nearly or quite a thousand dollars more than I did have at that time if I had kept at work and taken no part whatever in or about any river claim.

The Pelham company worked their claim and it paid for working after the stream was turned, but the returns as a whole were small, and the company was dissolved in the fall.

156

## **CHAPTER VIII.**

### **THE ILLUSION OF "GOLD LAKE."**

Many of the miners lost a whole season's labor, and had no more than they had the fall previous. In the early part of the season there was quite an excitement at Marysville, and at the mines on Feather River, known as the "Gold Lake" excitement.

This was caused by a man who told in some respects a very plausible story or yarn. He said he had been a long distance east into the Sierra Nevada mountains, where he had made the discovery of a lake where gold was so plentiful that it could be gathered in almost unlimited quantities.

He also said he was there at the lake for only a few days and that he had gathered more than he could carry, and had secreted it.

Many believed his story to be all true, and the result was that quite a large company was gathered and went away back into the mountains and camped. Gold Lake was searched for but could not be found. It was said that after getting back into the mountains the Gold Lake leader appeared to be insane.

The result of the expedition was the discovery of Nelson's Creek mines on a stream emptying into the middle fork of Feather River, some 90 miles or more in the mountains.

157

Hearing of this discovery, which was said to be very rich, I concluded to go and take my chances. This was before we had built our dam on the old claim. Alden J. Nutting went with me, as I remember. We traveled up there-on foot, and in those days in California every one carried his blankets, if nothing more. When we arrived at Nelson's creek, we found a large number of people already there, provisions scarce and high, and although there were some very good mines, they did not appear to be very extensive or lasting. We made a prospecting tour farther east among the mountains for two or three days, but as we found no gold in paying quantities, we soon after returned to the valley.

After we had abandoned our claim on the middle fork, I concluded to go to Nelson's Creek again. I started from Marysville and traveled up there the second time. This was in August, and yet at one place we traveled over a snow bank which we estimated was 25 feet deep. After arriving there in company with one or two others, I selected a claim on the middle fork of Feather River, a short distance below the mouth of Nelson's Creek, where the stream could be turned by a dam. We thought there was a possibility that the river bed might be rich, and we concluded to construct a small wing dam sufficient to test it. We put in the dam so as to throw the water from a small portion of the river's bed. The claim proved as worthless as our first one.

I then traveled up Nelson's Creek two or three miles and hired myself to a company who had turned the creek from its course and was working out its bed.

158

This was paying fairly well. If I remember correctly I was to have ten dollars per day and board. The next camp below ours on the creek was about 80 rods distant, where three men were at work. They were all from Vergennes, Vermont, and were neighbors before they left home. They had a

paying claim and were doing well. As the stream between the two camps passed through a small canyon, the trail was a rough one.

One Saturday night, about twelve o'clock, one of these men came running up to our camp very much excited and out of breath, saying his two partners had been killed. His version of the matter was that, as they all lay asleep, two or three men had killed his two companions with a hatchet while they slept, and that he was awakened by the noise of the blows, to discover a man with a hatchet raised over his head, just in the act of striking him the fatal blow. He had jumped to his feet and run for his life. He had heard someone running after him, but from the sound he thought his pursuer had fallen, and after that ceased to follow him.

We immediately went to the stricken camp, but could do nothing that night. The next morning we went down and found the two men in the creek. We took them out and found their heads cut to pieces, and also found the hatchet in the creek that was used by the murderers. The men were said to have had a considerable quantity of gold, which they kept under their heads. The gold could not be found.

We rolled the murdered men in their blankets as well as we could and buried them on the side of the mountain.

It would perhaps be natural for some to suspect the 159 survivor of the three men as being the guilty murderer of the other two, and that seemed to be the case to some extent, especially by those who knew but little of the circumstances, while all those that were present when the murdered men were found and buried, were of the opinion that he was innocent of the crime.

On the next Sunday, one week after the two dead men were found and buried, quite a company of men came into our camp, all being strangers. Soon after they began to inquire in relation to the circumstances accompanying the murders, and all such circumstances and conditions were minutely gone into so far as was known.

After learning all that seemed to be possible to be known about the sad matter, they quietly departed. We did not know their mission at the time. Soon after we learned that they came from a small mining town, a few miles distant. They heard of the murders, and of the circumstances of the three men being camped together, two of whom were killed.

They had talked the matter over and discussed the circumstances attending them, so far as they could learn them correctly at such a distance, and at a public meeting. They had arrived at the conclusion that the survivor of the three men was undoubtedly the murderer. The men that came to our camp had been selected at the meeting for the purpose of investigating the case, and to try the supposed murderer before Judge Lynch, and if found guilty, execute him.

When they came over Sunday morning they supposed it would all be completed and that they would return to their homes before night.

160

But after an investigation had been made by them, they came to the conclusion that the companion who had made his escape was innocent.

At the time I left home for California in April, 1849, I was not in the enjoyment of very good health. I was suffering somewhat from a cough, and it distressed me to inhale a long breath. I did not feel strong and robust. However, I had kept the matter a secret so far as was possible, thinking that if my friends knew the conditions they would oppose my going to California, and I was fully determined to go if possible and take the consequences, whatever they might be.

This condition of my health continued in some degree for a considerable length of time. While at Independence, Missouri, where we remained about four weeks, my illness caused a pain in my side when I rode horseback. The same was true after we had started on our journey over the plains. It gradually wore away and long before we reached the Rocky Mountains, my health seemed to be perfect.

It continued to be excellent during all the last part of the journey and through the winter of 1849-50. I was more fleshy and of heavier weight at that time than I had ever before been, or have been since. When cutting wood at Yuba City I weighed more than 160 pounds, but during the summer of 1850 I did not enjoy entirely uninterrupted good health.

Our work on Nelson's Creek was very laborious. It lay in a mountain gulch, deep down, where it was quite warm as long as the sun shone upon us. I cannot at this time recall the exact length of time I worked there,

CUSTOM HOUSE ON THE PLAZA. From an old print.

161 but would say it was from two to three weeks. Whenever I labored in my life, I always intended to keep up my end, or to perform my share of the work. No fault was made known to me here.

However, I was not feeling as well as I could desire, especially toward the close of my service there. Instead of feeling any improvement, I grew steadily worse.

The last morning I went to my work I felt miserable, but thought I would be able to overcome it, so I said nothing. I worked until noon when I felt obliged to quit for the day.

There was at that camp a man by the name of Jewett, from some place in Massachusetts, who the winter previous had stopped a while at the Pelham camp. The tragic fate of the men so near our camp seemed to make Mr. Jewett extremely nervous and timid. He seemed to be almost afraid of his own shadow, and ever after the tragedy he was talking about going to the valley, and from there to his home in New England. One obstacle to his making an immediate start was that he lacked the courage to go alone.

Two or three days after I had quit work he found some parties that were going to the valley, and as there was but two of them, he desired me to go with them to enlarge the party, and as he seemed to believe, make it safer.



I replied that as I was sick, probably I could not travel as fast as his party would desire to go, but if I did not improve in health within a few days, I thought I should go to the valley. I had no fear to travel alone and would prefer to do so, as I could take my own time. He was 162 very urgent that I should go with him, and said as he had a pack horse, he would carry my blankets and would make the journey as comfortable as possible for me. I finally consented, almost against my better judgment. This was near the last of August or the first of September.

We started on the morning of the next day after the arrangements had been completed. His horse was at Onion Valley, about eight miles on our way. From Nelson's Creek up the mountain, about one and one-half miles, it was very steep. That brought us to the top of the mountain. From there we traveled to Onion Valley. There we took a little refreshments and then packed the horse and started for Grass Valley, about 18 miles distant.

Although the air on the mountain was cool, the morning was pleasant. While in California I wore no coat. Shirts and pants were the clothing worn, and during the rainy season when it was cooler we wore extra flannel shirts. Blankets were much used instead of shirts when miners were not at work. At that time I was dressed with a "Hickory" shirt and thin pants, all cotton.

When we left Onion Valley my blankets were packed on the horse, as I didn't expect to need them on the road while walking.

Soon after we left Onion Valley it commenced raining, which soon after turned into a wet snow. This melted nearly as fast as it fell, and being thinly clad as I was, I was soon wet to the skin and very cold and uncomfortable. I thought that if I could only get my blankets out of the pack to put over my shoulders it 163 would be much more comfortable, and perhaps better for the health of a sick man.

I spoke to Mr. Jewett about it and he replied that he couldn't get at the blankets without unpacking the horse, and that he thought I could get along without them. I said no more about the matter. We at length arrived at Grass Valley, thoroughly drenched and almost exhausted.

While Mr. Jewett and his party were pitching the tent for the night, I went into a cloth eating house and seated myself on a board before a small fire burning on the ground. After being seated there for some time I felt very faint. I could see nothing for several minutes and everything looked black. I said nothing but kept my seat, which was near the table. I soon recovered from the faintness and became partially warm.

Supper was at length announced, but I did not desire to leave my seat, neither did I feel like eating anything. I turned and faced the table, ate a small piece of a cracker and drank a little tea, paid two dollars for supper, and again faced the fire.

When it was nearly night I went over a short distance to Mr. Jewett's camp. He said I had the scurvy, but I didn't think so. He wanted me to get some potatoes and eat them raw, scraped in vinegar. He urged the matter so persistently that I bought a pound of small potatoes, for which I paid one dollar and a half, scraped some of them into vinegar and made an effort to take them as medicine. It was too much like an emetic for me. I threw away those I had prepared, gave the balance to Mr. Jewett, and told him that rather than eat raw potatoes I would take my chances with the scurvy. But, 164 in fact, I did not believe I had the scurvy, and later I was thoroughly convinced that I did not have it. Mr. Jewett was very timid that night and very nervous.

Each one of the small party had some kind of firearms. I had a double barrel shotgun, which was loaded with buckshot, but during the rain it had become wet through so that it was impossible to discharge it without giving it a thorough cleaning and drying. He desired me to put it in thorough order and reload it. I told him I would not do it, that I was about to lie down and make myself as comfortable as possible.

He said we were all liable to be murdered before morning. I said to him that I felt no fear of it, and that I was willing to take the risk. The night passed quietly away, and the next morning I felt slightly rested, but no better otherwise. I had no appetite and was quite weak.

After Mr. Jewett and his party had eaten their breakfast, they packed up and started for the next camp, which was twelve or thirteen miles distant.

We soon fell in with another small party that was traveling the same way, and Jewett was very much pleased to have their company.

I could not travel as fast as the party, and falling behind I traveled alone nearly the entire distance. When I arrived at the camp I was nearly exhausted. I did not at that time look for Jewett and his party. They were preparing or eating their dinners a short distance away. But I found my blankets where he unpacked his horse, and I lay down upon them under a tree and soon fell asleep.

165

Not long after, I was awakened by Mr. Jewett, who said he wanted my blankets to be packed. I told him he couldn't have them any more, as I was going no farther that day. He inquired the reason, and I said I could go no farther until I had some rest. He asked me if I was sick, and I asked him if he had just learned the fact. I had supposed he knew it before we started, when he promised to be so kind to me if I would go with him. He desired that I would permit him to take my gun with him, and promised to leave it at the Pelham camp. I was glad to have him do this as it would release me of that much load, and I was no more afraid to travel there in the mountains unarmed at that time than I now fear to travel the streets of Nashua in broad daylight.

This was the last I saw of Mr. Jewett. I afterwards learned that he went to the Pelham camp, where he made a short stay. He soon after went to San Francisco and started for home, as I remember, by way of Mexico, but it was said he never reached his home. What his fate was I never knew. It seemed very certain that his cowardice was a much more prominent trait in his character than his hospitality. I remained over at the place during that afternoon and night, and the next day and night. I felt somewhat rested, but did not improve much in other respects. I didn't quite enjoy the place and thought I would try to make a little progress toward the valley.

There were two or three stopping places on the road within eight or nine miles, one of which was Strawberry Valley. I believe the first one was about three miles distant. I settled my bill and started in the morning, traveling leisurely and reached the first station, where I 166 rested a while. I then went to the next and also to the third. I had then made about nine miles in all. Here I rested again, and at first thought I would remain until the next day, the next stopping place being twelve miles distant. As I didn't just fancy this place, I concluded to start for the next station, and should I become exhausted before reaching it I could lie down with my blankets for the night by the side of the road in the dense woods. These mountains were very heavily timbered.

I reached the place near night but I was very tired. This "ranch" consisted of a cloth house, which contained a "bar," table, a cooking stove, with some other furnishings. Near by was a large tent in which travelers could sleep upon the ground by paying two dollars for the privilege.

I was glad to avail myself of even this meagre benefit, but I awoke during the night suffering excruciating pains in my body and limbs. I tried in vain to rise and stand upon my feet. I believe I never suffered more severe pains than during that night. The next forenoon I succeeded, after long and laborious efforts, to get upon my feet and move about a little.

I remained here four or five days and had mended somewhat, so I was contemplating resuming my journey, when I was surprised to see an old acquaintance enter the tent. His name was George Carlton and he was from Pelham, N.H., a man of somewhat rough manners but with a kind heart. He was as glad to see me as I was him. It seemed that Jewett had informed the party at Pelham camp of the fact that he had left me in the 167 mountains sick. There was no Jewett about Mr. Carlton. The following morning, seeing that he was making preparations to leave, some one asked him where he was intending to go. He replied that he was going into the mountains to see if he could locate Webster. Some one of the company (one of the Pelham men, I will not mention his name) said he did not believe it to be wise for them to take into camp any more invalids. Mr. Carlton made the reply that they had learned that Webster was reported sick in the mountains, and that he was about to make an effort to find him, and that if he was dead he would bury him, but if found alive, he would bring him into camp. He started on foot and alone. At a station below the

place where he found me, he observed a mule straying about the woods. It was a small animal, thin and of but little value. Mr. Carlton gave the proprietor the circumstances, and he said he did not apprehend that any owner would appear for the mule, and that he could take it if he desired to do so. He led the mule as he had no saddle, and the little brute was scarcely fit for a saddle animal. It was in the forenoon of his second day out that Mr. Carlton found me. I bought a saddle from the proprietor of the place, and we started for the Pelham camp. I rode the little mule. We reached camp the next evening. Dr. Batchelder prescribed some medicine for me, which I believe was the only time I employed a physician during my stay in California.

I remained with my Pelham friends five or six days, improving in health quite rapidly.

168

## **CHAPTER IX.**

### **MINING ON THE YUBA RIVER**

Some time after we had cut the hay I met Mr. Damon, my partner, when he said that he had concluded to go to his home in the East for a short stay, and he would return probably as early as the next winter or spring. He desired me to sell the hay before the rainy season should set in and retain his part of the proceeds until his return. I proposed to send his share of whatever I should receive for the hay to him in the East, but he said that it would be his wish that I would keep it until his return.

One object I had in view when I left Nelson's Creek was to attend to selling the hay. While it would be some time before the rainy season would set in, there was danger from fire. Everything in the valley was as dry as tinder, and the hay was on the open plain where people were passing back and forth to the mines and cities.

I concluded to make an effort to dispose of it. This was some time near the end of September. I traveled from the Pelham camp to the place where we cut and stacked the hay and found it to be safe.

I sold a small part of it to some one, and then went to Marysville. I there managed to dispose of the balance on condition that the purchaser should do the teaming, but that I should assist in the loading. The distance it was to be drawn was 12 or 15 miles. As it would require several days to do the teaming, and as there was no convenient place near by where I could procure board, I concluded to board myself and sleep on the hay. So I filled a half barrel with water, procured a quantity of salt pork and other provisions, which I hired drawn to the haystack.

I remained at that place and assisted the teamster in loading the hay, otherwise I had no company with the exception of coyotes, of which there were plenty.

These little animals of the wolf species were very numerous at this time. They were not dangerous, but were mischievous. They were small in size but they could make a great amount of noise. About the time it was becoming dark every evening they would begin their howling. First, the voice of one would be heard in some direction, which would seem to be answered by another in another quarter, and then another and another would follow, until there would appear to be a perfect chorus of voices, howling and barking.

I had heretofore learned to keep completely out of their way as much as was possible everything that I had that they would care to eat. However, they soon found my quarters, and I would hear them in the night all about near where I was lying. At first I took little notice of them. One night I was awakened by more noise and disturbance than was usual, when I arose to see what they were doing.

The moon shone brightly and I could see them in large numbers around and very near me. I made an effort to drive them away but they would scamper for a short distance only, when they would stand and look at me.

Upon making an investigation I found they had drawn 170 my pork away a considerable distance into the grass. It was in a sack and had been almost under my head. They had also taken almost everything else that they could find. I took the sack of pork and some of the other most tempting

articles I had to the top of the stack of hay, and after making a hole in the pile and buying them about two feet deep, I made my bed directly over them. In this way I succeeded in preserving them from the coyotes.

The next morning I discovered that they had carried away almost everything I had about the camp. They had dragged away to a considerable distance a brand new rope, about 30 feet in length. A new tin pint drinking dipper, a tin spoon, and other articles I found scattered about in various directions, and they had even invaded my water cask and taken the bung out.

I don't now remember at what price I sold the hay, but believe it was between \$40 and \$50 a ton, so we made a very fair job in cutting it.

Between the time of the disposal of the hay and the time of the setting in of the rainy season, I cannot at this time give any detailed account of my work.

Some time during the season, and I believe it was during this time, I cut some more wood near Yuba City. At that time the steamboat company did not wish to buy any green wood, but they said if we should cut some and have it drawn out and piled on the bank of the river they would need it after it had become seasoned. Some one, Worchester Gage of Pelham, as I remember, cut with me. We cut quite a quantity and has it piled on the river bank below Yuba City, near an Indian village.

171

About this time the cholera was raging among these Indians to a fearful extent, and many of them died of the disease. It was their custom to cremate their dead bodies, which they did by placing them on a pile of wood and burning it. The flesh was burned, but the bones would remain unconsumed, which they would gather up and deposit in a small hole in the ground, dug for that purpose. When these bodies were being consumed it created a very sickening odor. After the wood became seasoned it was very convenient for these Indians to use for their domestic purposes, and they carried away considerable quantities of it.

I once tried to frighten them, telling them that I would shoot the first one that I should find in the act of removing any of the wood. It seemed to me that there was not so much removed afterwards. Before the wood was sold Mr. Gage went home to Pelham and left his share of the wood with me to be disposed of and to forward to him his share of the proceeds. I afterwards sold it and sent him his share of the money.

Some time during the fall, after I had sold the hay, I was traveling up the road going toward Bidwell's, when I heard a horse coming behind me, and on looking back I saw some one riding toward me horseback that I soon recognized as my friend Mr. Damon, though I had supposed he was in the states. He soon overtook me and said he had been no farther than San Francisco, where he had remained for some time, and had concluded to return and not go East at present. On his reaching Marysville he had learned that I had started for Feather River mines, and he came on after me. I was 172 expecting him for several months and had made no plans to pay him his share for the hay, but presumed of course that he would like his money. I believe I was owing him something more than \$400.

I explained to him the situation, and said that probably I did not have enough with me to settle with him in full. He said he had anticipated that situation and that I could pay him as much as I could conveniently spare, or if I could not spare him any at that time it would be just as well. After we had calculated the amount due him from me, we went into one of the cloth hotels by the roadside near by and weighed out the amount in gold dust that was his due, and which exhausted almost the whole amount I had with me. He almost absolutely refused to take it *all* at that time, but I insisted and he did so. As he was then present I desired to have the matter fully settled.

We then parted and he went toward Marysville, while I continued my journey toward Feather River mines. I have no remembrance of ever meeting Mr. Damon afterwards. He was a good man.

One incident that transpired during the spring of 1850 while I was in the mines of Feather River: Several of us were camped there at the time, one of whom was a man from some town in New Hampshire who crossed the plains in company with us, and whose name as I now remember



it, was Watkins. He and I were taken at about the same time with a similar illness, and one was substantially as ill as the other. I didn't apprehend that either of us was dangerously ill. Mr. Watkins soon lost his courage and began to talk that he should never again meet his friends at home. I endeavored to encourage him to the best of my ability, but it seemed to have no beneficial effect whatever.

Soon after I began to improve, but he grew worse constantly and became more despondent. We had a tent to camp in, but as it was previous to the end of the rainy season, there was yet some damp, cold, stormy weather, and it was cold in the tent.

That he might be made as comfortable as was possible, I constructed a stone fireplace at the end of the tent and built a stone chimney to a point a little higher than the ridge of the tent. This made it possible to keep a fire so as to warm the tent and keep it dry and comfortable, and it operated quite satisfactorily. Mr. Watkins seemed to be very well pleased with the arrangements, but did not improve. I nursed him to the best of my ability, but he steadily declined, and a few days later he died.

We opened a grave in a convenient place, wound his blankets about him, and buried him, which was all we could do for him. Poor Watkins! He had gone to his home, but not to the home that seemed to be uppermost in his mind.

One day in the fall of 1850, when I was in Marysville, there was an auction at which horses were being sold. A very thin, rundown horse was offered and as nobody made a bid, I started it at a small amount, and as no one raised the bid, it was knocked down to me. After making a little inquiry I learned that a man keeping a ranch a few miles out, took horses to herd. I took the horse out there and engaged him to keep it until I should call for it.

Some time in November, about the time the rainy season set in, I one day met George Carlton at Marysville. He inquired what my plans for the winter were. I had made no definite plans for the future. He suggested that we go up on the Yuba, as I remember it was to Park's Bar, possibly it was Long's Bar, and work with him during the rainy season at mining. I consented to go with him. At

this time I believe the Pelham company had broken up and scattered. A few of the number had gone home or did so soon after, and the others were at different places. The company had made some money, but their mining claim did not yield anything near the amount of gold that was expected of it.

Previous to this time I had met James M. Butler in Marysville on his way to San Francisco and they to go home. I sent by him to my brother Moses at Pelham 18 3/4 ounces of gold dust, which at \$16 per ounce, the California price, was worth \$300. This was to pay the money borrowed to pay the expenses to California in 1849. Mr. Butler went home by the way of Mexico and had a hard journey. He arrived home in January.

Mr. Carlton and I went up the Yuba River and made a camp. I made a small quicksilver machine for washing gold. It was of my own invention and I had made one of the same kind before. It was made watertight, and when working it the back end was set lower than the front end. The quicksilver was worked in the rear end, and that end being the lowest part of the machine, the quicksilver would remain there. When the gold touched the quicksilver it would amalgamate and be held there, while the gravel would be washed away and pass out at 175 the other end of the machine. It operated very satisfactorily.

The mines were not very rich at this place, but in good weather we could each make from \$8 to \$12 dollars a day, and some days considerably more. One advantage here over many other places was that the water did not give us so much trouble, as the bar was larger and higher than many others. The rainy season was not nearly so severe as was that of the year previous. We could also procure better provisions. All eatables were high, and that was to be expected, but they were of a very fair quality. We could procure plenty of either Irish or sweet potatoes, produced, I believe, at the Sandwich Islands.

Mr. Carlton cooked the meat and potatoes and I made and baked the bread and washed the dishes. We passed a very comfortable winter.

At this place were two brothers by the name of Davis from Nashua, N.H. The given name of the elder one I believe was Josiah. If I remember correctly they both lived to return home, but both died not very long after. Josiah died first. The younger one was not more than seventeen or eighteen years of age at that time, but he was very active and smart. They kept a store in quite a large cloth building very near our camp.

An elderly man from eastern Tennessee slept in the building. He was a blacksmith and was probably a man who never accumulated very much property during his life before he came to California. He owned a little forge with a kit of tools and did jobs for the miners, for which he received good pay, and he had accumulated 176 already between \$2,000 and \$3,000, all of which was in gold dust and which he constantly kept secreted on the ground under his blankets where he laid. He was very jolly and happy and probably then had more money than he ever anticipated having.

Within the same building lodged a man from Virginia, a miner, a tall, spare man, always good-natured, but somewhat taciturn or reserved, and appeared to be an honest man, one which almost any one would not hesitate to trust. The Davis brothers, and some others, also slept in the same building.

I was very friendly with the Davis brothers, who by the way, were brothers of the late S. S. Davis of Nashua. I was in the building quite often when I was not at work.

One day Mr. Blacksmith came running from the building about breakfast time, almost insane with excitement. Upon making inquiry as to the cause of his grief he said some one had stolen all his purse of gold. At first it was thought he had probably mislaid it, and that it would be found where he had put it.

An investigation was made at once, after which all present were satisfied that a theft had been committed by some one, but who the guilty party was no one could seem to determine.

The first thing to be done was to make a thorough search of every person known to have been in the building that morning. That was done, and as I had been into the place, I was searched with the others, but the search revealed nothing.

There was a man there of rather eccentric character, who was also mining on the bar. He made quite VIGILANTES IN '49.

177 numerous inquiries, during which it was brought out that the Virginia man went to the river quite early that morning for a pail of water. After leaving the route he took, the eccentric man took the trail and followed it to near the river, where he discovered some traces or tracks leading from the trail a short distance to a place where the sand had been disturbed, as appeared, with some one's hands.

He didn't disturb it or even go to the place, but immediately returned and made report of his discovery. A party soon after went with him, and digging away the sand at the spot of the disturbance, the blacksmith's bag of gold was revealed.

It was carried to the camp and Mr. Blacksmith was asked to identify his bag of gold, which he had lost. This was before he knew there was any prospect of ever recovering it. This he readily did, and when it was placed in his hands he was as happy a man as I ever saw. He was so overjoyed that he wanted to give onehalf of it to those that found it.

However, the incident so shocked him that he concluded to return immediately to his home in Tennessee, where he had a daughter. Soon after he left for home.

The evidence against the Virginian seemed to be quite conclusive. He was the only person known to have pursued that trail to the river that morning, and the footprints in the sand agreed very perfectly with his boots. "Judge Lynch" was soon summoned to hold a court. The court was organized and the Virginian was arraigned. The evidence was very damaging, but was circumstantial and not entirely positive, every one 178 present and hearing the evidence seemed to believe him to be the guilty party. The verdict of the court was to the effect: That he was probably guilty of committing

the robbery, but as there was room for a little doubt, he was entitled to that doubt. He was not sentenced to be executed at once, provided he would leave the bar immediately, otherwise, he must suffer the penalty. He immediately left and I never again saw or heard of him.

We remained at that place until near the end of March, 1851. I believe I enjoyed our stay here better than any other time of the same length during my time in California. My health was fairly good; we made average pay, and had good company.

About this time we concluded to go to San Francisco, where neither of us had yet been.

Mr. Carlton had been talking continually about going to farming in some of the coast valleys, which at that time seemed to be paying good returns. We started for Marysville.

At that time the Yuba River was quite high, swollen by recent rains, and we were obliged to make the crossing at a ferry. At the place of the ferry the current was rapid and strong, and immediately below were falls or rapids, full of immense boulders.

The ferry boat was a large one, made for the purpose of carrying teams, mules and horses, as well as foot passengers. It was held at its place and guided across the river by a large rope made fast over the river. At this high stage of water only foot passengers were ferried over. The rope was a large one, but I noticed that it was quite old and considerably worn.

179

There were several fellow passengers with us in crossing. As soon as we were fairly in the stream I noticed there was a heavy strain on the rope, and it seemed to me it was liable to part at any second. I looked at the whirling, boiling stream below, that I might, if possible, make some consistent attempt to save myself in case the rope should part and we should go over the rapids.

I could see no possibility of escape for any one aboard in that event. I uttered not a word until we had landed safely on the opposite shore, when I made the inquiry of the ferryman if he considered the rope used to be safe for the purpose at that stage of water. He said he believed it to be perfectly

safe. I told him I could not be hired at any price to recross the stream again under like conditions, as I did not consider the rope safe.

I afterwards learned that on the following day, while thirteen men were crossing in the same boat, the rope parted and every one of the men, including the ferryman, were drowned.

We went to Marysville, and I continued on to the ranch where I had left the horse the fall previous. Upon inquiring for my horse of the proprietor, he went out to the range and returned with a sleek, fat black horse that did not seem to resemble in any way the one I had left there, except in color. At first I could not believe it to be the same animal, but I accepted his word, and after settling for its keeping, I rode it away. It was a very handsome horse. As Mr. Carlton also owned a horse we rode down the valley on horse back to Sacramento City, where we left our horses and took a steamer for San Francisco.

180

At that time there were as many as three quite large steamers constantly running between Sacramento and San Francisco. One company was running the "Senator" and "New World," both of which I believe formerly were run between Boston and Bangor, and had been taken around Cape Horn to San Francisco. The other was the Hartford, a slower and older boat. The fare I don't remember, but it was not so much on the Hartford as on either of the other two boats. We took passage on the Hartford.

This was near the time that the excitement in regard to the Vigilance Committee was at its height. Several persons had been tried and executed in San Francisco, and considerable excitement existed there. The civil law had taken the place of lynch law, and had been in operation several months.

Murders, robberies and other crimes were of almost every-day occurrence. The courts had failed in most cases to make convictions, and the criminals, especially in such cases where they possessed a considerable amount of wealth, went free and unpunished. Life or property had become very unsafe almost anywhere. The Vigilance Committee soon caused a far different and a much better state of affairs. Many were the cases in which the evidence against the prisoner would seem conclusive, but

the verdict would be “not guilty.” The prisoner would be immediately seized, taken to the rooms of the committee and there tried and convicted and executed, and all within the space of a short time after he had been cleared by the court.

181

Several such cases took place while we remained in San Francisco, which was several days.

We went out to the old Mission Dolores, and to what has been later called Seal Rocks. We continued our journey down the valley and made some investigation in regard to lands for farming purposes. We learned that all those lands were claimed under old Spanish or Mexican grants, which at that time had not been settled or adjusted by the United States government, consequently we abandoned the scheme of farming and returned to Marysville.

We soon after parted and I have no remembrance of ever meeting Mr. Carlton after that time. He never returned to his home in New Hampshire, but died in California a few years later.

182

## **CHAPTER X.**

### **WITH COMPASS AND CHAIN IN OREGON**

I had occasionally met Mr. Elder, and about this time he informed me that a surveyor general had been appointed for the territory of Oregon; that he was a man from Illinois, with whom he was well acquainted, and that he would probably be at San Francisco on his way to Oregon in a few weeks.

It was his intention to meet the official in San Francisco, expecting to make arrangements to go to Oregon and do some work on the government surveys. He also said to me that if he should do so, he would like to have me go with him. I did not decide at that time to go.

About that time I met Mr. Pinney in Marysville. I believe he had been cutting wood at Yuba City for some time previous. During the late summer or autumn previous he was employed with others at some place on or near Nelson's Creek, where they had struck a good claim and had taken out quite

an amount of gold. I never learned the exact amount, but supposed it to be from \$4,000 to \$5,000 for his share. Some time while chopping he had boarded at Yuba City with a Rev. Mr. George H. Hanson.

Mr. Hanson and a Mr. Bayliss, who kept a hotel at Yuba City, owned the ferry across Feather River at that place. Pinney informed me that Mr. Hanson desired to let him the contract to excavate a road from the boat landing on either side of the river up through the banks so as to permit of teams passing to better advantage. If I would contract with him for doing the work, he thought we might do well.

We looked the situation over and found the cut on the Yuba City side would be light, but that on the Marysville side was quite deep. I suggested to Mr. Pinney that the better plan would be that Mr. Hanson should set his stakes so that we could know just what would be expected from us to complete the work. Mr. Hanson proposed that the road should be at a true grade from the shore to a certain point, about 150 feet distant, and should be of sufficient width to permit the passage of two teams when meeting, the banks to be properly sloped.

After considerable discussion relative to the depth of the cut, which I claimed would be twelve feet, he replied that he knew it could not be more than nine feet deep, and made the following expression in his western dialect: "You needn't for to dig it more than nine feet anyhow."

We made the contract to do the work with the understanding that we would not be required to excavate over nine feet in the deepest place, but it was not written out. We bought some shovels and the next day we commenced the work. The material to be removed was all fine sand and was good shoveling. We began at the waters edge and threw it into the river and it was washed away by the current. We made the sand fly fast and we made a large showing on the first day.

After we had worked away from the river so that we could no longer throw the sand into the water, we used wheelbarrows. This was a very much slower process.



We made the cut nine feet deep at the deepest point and finished it in width so that two teams could easily pass each other, but Mr. Hanson then claimed that it must be on a true grade. This would at least add one-third to the amount of work. But as we had no written contract, we concluded that the better way out of it was to make the cut as he proposed.

Another matter that came into controversy later was about the width. At the time the contract was made, when Mr. Hanson said the cut must be of sufficient width for two teams to pass, I made the remark that that was very indefinite, and made the request that he should give the number of feet required at the bottom of the cut, and he did so.

About this time Mr. Pinney received a letter from Pelham, N.H., which I suppose was from a Miss Young, with whom he had formerly been somewhat intimate, and whom he married later. This letter seemed to have such an effect upon him that he lost all interest in the work, and a few days later proposed to me that I should pay him for his share of the work completed. He said he had concluded to start for home at once. I pleaded in vain that he should remain until our contract was finished.

I paid him for his interest and he started for San Francisco. We supposed the contract to be nearly finished. I had met Mr. Elder and he informed me that he had met the surveyor-general of Oregon, John B. Preston of Illinois, in San Francisco. Mr. Preston was 185 not the first man appointed, the other having declined to accept the office.

Mr. Elder had been employed as assistant engineer on the Michigan and Illinois canal in Illinois by the new surveyor-general. He said Mr. Preston had promised him work on the government survey. He intended to go to Oregon a little later and desired me to go with him. I agreed to go.

I continued to work on the job and at length finished it, as I supposed. I had made the cut a true grade from the river to the point agreed upon, which made it 13 feet deep at the deepest point. The width was the number of feet stated by Mr. Hanson, but it was not quite wide enough to permit of two teams passing each other.

I had also finished the cut on the Yuba City side as was agreed upon, and I supposed that Mr. Hanson would be willing to accept the work and pay the amount agreed upon. I informed him that the contract was completed and requested him to examine it.

We went to the Marysville side, and after measuring the bottom of the deep cut Mr. Hanson said it was not sufficiently wide to permit two teams passing each other. I reminded him of the conversation in relation to the matter when the number of feet was given by him, but he could recollect nothing in relation to that matter. He insisted that it must be made considerably wider before it would be accepted. After having done about one-third more work than we really had contracted to do, to be required to make the cut two or three feet wider, when it was 150 feet long and 13 feet deep at the deepest point, seemed to me to be asking too much. But I found him determined not to pay for the work unless I yielded. I concluded to keep quiet and make the widening as he proposed.

I made the alteration as he had suggested and again I informed him that the contract was completed. Again he went with me to the place of the cut, and also Mr. Bayliss was with us.

Mr. Hanson began to measure and also to find fault with the work, claiming that the job was not nearly completed. He said he would not pay me until considerable more was done.

I could endure it no longer, and I said to Mr. Hanson that he was the meanest man I had had any dealings with in California. Thereupon, he became almost frantic, and he immediately drew the square over my head. It was a heavy carpenter's steel square. He exclaimed that if I uttered another word he would split my head open! I immediately repeated the remark. Of course, it was not my intention to stand there quietly and permit him to cleave my head open, as he had threatened to do. But I stood still nevertheless, intending, if he attempted to strike me, to pursue the course that might seem to be best under the existing conditions. He threw down the weapon and said he would never pay me a dollar for the work until I had done a large amount more to finish it. Determined not to yield now, I replied I had already removed about twice the amount of earth the contract called for at first; that he had continually lied about it; that no dependence whatever could be placed on his

word or veracity; that he was a very unjust specimen of a 187 man; and that I would never remove another shovelful of earth for him.

He went away saying he would never pay me a cent. I was as fully determined I would do no more work on the job under any conditions. At first I thought I would sue him for the amount due me. After considering the matter for a day or two I concluded I would see what could be done with Mr. Bayliss, his partner, about the matter. I had been acquainted with him for a number of months, and had considered him an honest man. He had no part in making the contract so far as I was concerned. I went to him one day and informed him that I was about to go to Oregon and that I should like to settle the matter. As he was a partner with Mr. Hanson in the ferry, and I had always believed him to be a reasonable man, I had come to him to talk about the matter. Mr. Bayliss listened to my statements very kindly, but said he regretted the conversation that had taken place between Mr. Hanson and myself. If that had been otherwise he thought the matter might have been adjusted with little trouble, but Mr. Hanson was a very passionate man, and as he was then feeling toward me, he would not agree to any settlement that would be satisfactory to me. He said it would be of no use whatever to undertake to have Mr. Hanson agree to pay the full amount of the contract price, but provided I would consent to make a small discount he would see what arrangement could be made with him. When I again met Mr. Bayliss a little later, the proposed settlement had been agreed upon and he paid me accordingly.

## 188

I soon after left Marysville for San Francisco, on my way to Oregon. At San Francisco I met Mr. Elder and also Mr. Pinney, who had been waiting here all this time for the sailing of the steamer for Panama. He expected now to sail within two or three days. He might as well have remained and assisted me finishing the contract.

Mr. Pinney had brought his gold with him. It had been put up in several buckskin bags. After his arrival in San Francisco, instead of depositing it in one of the banks for safe keeping during his stay in the city, he had buried it in the sands of one of the vacant lots of the city.

When he went to recover it he failed to find it, when he became thoroughly alarmed. After a more thorough search, however, he found it. He said it had been removed from the place where he first deposited it and had been buried in another place. It was in vain I tried to make him believe that if anybody had taken the gold from its hiding place he would have carried it away, instead of concealing it in a new place, and he would never have got his hands on it again. While he admitted the force of the argument, he said he was perfectly sure that he found it in a different location from where he placed it. He said he was very nervous when he failed to find his fortune where he had buried it.

Almost any one would be nervous under similar conditions. However, it was always my opinion that he found it at the exact spot where he had placed it, but that he had mistaken the locality. Probably Mr. Pinney's deposit of gold did not weigh less than from twenty to twenty-five 189 pounds, which would make an awkward pocket companion.

I had been in California two winters and one summer, or a little over nineteen months. As a whole I had enjoyed my experiences quite well.

We remained in San Francisco a few days, waiting for the sailing of the steamer for Portland, Oregon, and left on Wednesday, June 4, 1851, in the Pacific mail steam-

After we had passed out through the Golden Gate into the Pacific ocean, the sea became quite rough, but as I had never been on the ocean before, I did not realize it was any rougher than usual. Nearly all the passengers were seasick. I thought I should escape, but in the evening I also became a victim. The seasickness stood by me for two or three days, and was the only time, with one exception, I was ever afflicted that way.

We passed over the bar at the mouth of the Columbia river on Sunday, June 8th, and arrived at Portland, Oregon, on Monday the 9th, where we remained over night.

On Tuesday, June 10th, we passed up the River Willamette, about twelve miles, to Oregon City, in a small, open iron steamer, that probably might safely carry 15 or 20 passengers.

At the time we arrived in Oregon the surveys had been commenced by two parties. The meridian and base lines had to be established and run for greater or lesser distances before any other surveys could be made.

The surveyor-general had taken with him from the states several experienced surveyors and quite a number of other persons to engage in the surveys. A point near 190 Portland was selected from which to the commence the meridian and base lines. Mr. James E. Freeman, a man who had been a deputy surveyor in Wisconsin, had been awarded the contract to run the meridian line south from Portland, and William Ives, another experienced government surveyor, had taken the contract to extend the meridian line north from the same point to Puget Sound. These parties were engaged at running the meridian line at the time of our arrival in Oregon, and had all the assistance needed, so there was no prospect for any work on the surveys for me for an indefinite time.

I had been studying surveying when an opportunity presented itself, but knew practically nothing of the government system of public surveys. There seemed to be but little work to be had at Oregon City, and board was quite high.

Mr. Elder was engaged by the surveyor-general as chief clerk in the surveyor-general's office. I was a stranger to the surveyor-general and all his deputies that he brought with him, and I knew that he would provide places for all his own party before a stranger like myself would receive any attention. Yet, I knew Mr. Elder was a good friend to me, but as he was engaged in the office, the prospect seemed to be that he would have no contract, consequently could give me no assistance that was most needed by me. It seemed to me that I had made a mistake in leaving California, and I thought seriously of returning. But through Mr. Elder's encouragement I was induced to remain.

We boarded at a hotel which was one of two kept in Oregon City, where board was six dollars a week, or 191 one dollar and fifty cents per day. One little incident that transpired while at this hotel

I will relate to show how sometimes people injure themselves in being too sharp in small affairs. At the time I came to this hotel it was quite uncertain what length of time I should remain. So I had an understanding with the landlord that if my stay should be a week or more, the price would be by the week, but should it be less than a week, I should pay the price by the day.

After remaining for about three days, I concluded to leave for a time, and as it was uncertain when I should return, I settled my board bill, paying the day price. It so happened that I returned on the evening of the same day, and occupied my room as before. I then remained during the remainder of the week and some days over. When I came to settle my board with the landlord he presented a bill made up by the day price for the time after I had paid him.

I claimed the agreement was, if I remained for a whole week, or seven days or more, that the price should be by the week, and that the fact that I settled with him and made a payment at the middle of the week did not change the matter, so far as right and justice was concerned. At the time of the former settlement I paid him a part of a week's board, and that now I was to pay him the balance. But he failed to see the matter in that light, and claimed the day price.

Consequently, I paid him on his basis by the day, but I left him to board at the other hotel, "Mosses," where I ever after stayed when in Oregon City.

192

Soon after arriving in Oregon I went south up the Willemette valley among the farmers, thinking possibly I would find some work for a time, but as I found no employment, I returned to Oregon City after a few days.

Some one informed me that a mill was being erected on the Tualitan River, a few miles from Oregon City, and that the owner of the mill needed some more help.

I went to the location where the mill was being built and engaged to work for three dollars a day and board for a short time. I commenced work on Monday, June 30th. The labor was very hard, it

being on a dam across the stream, which was being constructed of stone, brush and gravel. All of this material had to be carried by hand.

I labored on the dam for twelve days, when it was nearly completed, and the proprietor, Mr. Madden, discharged a considerable part of his help. He had other work to be done in building the sawmill and its foundations, etc. He said to me he should pay his laborers only two dollars per day after that date, but that if I would remain he would pay me two dollars and fifty cents. I continued on the job until the 3d day of August.

About this time Mr. Elder one day came over to see me and informed me that he had contracted with the government to resurvey Oregon City and desired me to assist him in the work. At that time he had very little work in the office, as none of the surveys had been completed. I went to Oregon City, but it was some time before he was prepared to commence the job of resurveying the town. In the meantime I was pursuing the study of surveying in earnest.

#### MINERS STARTING FOR HOME.

193

We commenced the survey on Thursday, August 21st, and completed it on September 29th, making an entirely new survey and setting the bounds, which was authorized and approved by the United States government.

While at work on the Tualitan River, the last part of my work there had been on the river, clearing it from sunken timbers and obstructions, so as to permit logs being floated down to the mill.

During the time that I was engaged on the Oregon City survey for Mr. Elder, the contracts had been let to survey township lines, one to Butler Ives, a brother of William Ives, dated August 15; one to William Ives, dated September 10; and one to James E. Freeman, dated September 17. These contracts provided for the surveying of the exterior lines of twenty townships, within the most thickly settled part of the Willamette valley, and principally south of Oregon City, reaching as far south as Township No. 10, or near to Albany on the Willamette River.

Mr. Elder made arrangements with Mr. Freeman, when the work at Oregon City should be completed for me to go out and work for him. Mr. Freeman's contract included some of the Willamette and Santiam Rivers, and extended southerly so as to include townships 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 south of range I west, and townships 9 and 10 south of ranges 2, 3 and 4 west, with a part of the 2d standard parallel south. This work was from 30 to 50 miles south of Oregon City.

After the Oregon City work had been completed, I left the place and traveled on foot and alone southerly to the point where Mr. Freeman's party was at work, and 194 found them without trouble. Mr. Freeman had five or six men in his party, a part of whose names I yet recall.

Zenas F. Moody from Chicopee, Mass., who went to Oregon at or about the same time as the surveyor-general. He was young, only 20 years of age. He afterwards became governor of Oregon for four years. Another was George W. Hyde, a brother-in-law of Mr. Preston, the surveyor-general; and another was Allen F. Seymour, of New York state, all of whom went to Oregon with the party of Mr. Preston, and had worked with Mr. Freeman on the meridian line. Mr. Moody and Mr. Seymour were chainmen.

All the government public land surveys were required to be made with Burt's patent solar compass. This was an instrument that was guided by the sun instead of the magnetic needle, and was of far greater accuracy. It was provided with a needle that could be used when it was impossible, from any cause, to make use of the sun.

The township lines were all required to be surveyed by the sun, but subdivisions were permitted to be made in part by the needle, at such places where local attraction did not exist to great extent. At this time I knew nothing whatever in regard to the working of the solar compass. I had never even seen the instrument. It is very reliable, but is provided with several arcs, which must be constantly adjusted; the most important of these are the latitude arc and the declination arc. The exact latitude, even to one minute of a degree, of the place of work, must be set off on the latitude arc, and the declination of the sun, north or south, must be set off on the declination arc, also to the exact minute



for the month, 195 day and hour, otherwise the instrument would not give the true meridian of the sun.

The next morning after I came into camp Mr. Freeman told me to take the axe for that day. He also told me to blaze the trees that stood on each side and near to the line as run by the compassman where there were trees, and to prepare posts for the section and quarter-section corners. I have a distinct recollection of feeling considerably embarrassed, as I did not fully comprehend all the duties I was expected to perform. It was all new to me.

The line was started and the first tree that needed to be marked was blazed on the proper side, but I made it quite low down. I went along the line a short distance and turned about, facing the tree I had marked. It at once occurred to me that the purpose of blazing those trees was for a guide by which to follow the lines, and that marks should be made sufficiently high so as to be readily seen at a distance, and that afterwards I would make the marks higher up on the trees.

While I stood looking at the marked tree, Mr. Freeman said: "Make the marks a little higher on the trees." Mr. Hyde gave me some instructions as to what the corner posts should be, and how they should be prepared, and I soon became familiar with the duties of an "axeman." I continued to perform these duties for several weeks, until one day Mr. Freeman said to me that perhaps I might think it strange he kept me as axeman so long. He had not at first intended to do so, but they had tried two or three before I came and could not make 196 them understand the work. As I had done it so well he had hesitated about making a change.

This was the first time that I had known if I had given even ordinary satisfaction. I said to him that I was satisfied, that I had enjoyed the work, and that I felt greatly pleased if I had given satisfaction.

Mr. Freeman was not an expert mathematician, and as I had studied trigonometry pretty thoroughly, I could calculate distances very readily by logarithmic sines. There were many triangulations to make and distances to calculate across rivers and bayous. When I first began work for Mr. Freeman, he requested that I would make the calculations of the distances with him. He would work them by the traverse table, and I by logarithmic sines. Sometimes we would agree in our results, but very

often we would obtain different results, and in such cases we would each go over the work again. In almost every such instance the error was found in his work.

After a time he gave up making all such calculations and trusted it wholly to me, unless they were of a very simple character.

Mr. Hyde left the party soon after I began work for Mr. Freeman. He assisted him in making the calculations before I came. It was very important that the work of the calculations of these triangulations and distances should be done correctly, as a small error was liable to cause much trouble later, and sometimes might cost hundreds of dollars to correct.

We continued the work, but in November, previous to the finishing of the contract, the rainy season began and 197 there was much rainy and cloudy weather, so the survey was continued under considerable difficulty.

About November 20 Mr. Freeman concluded to go to Oregon City. The contract was not completed, but with favorable weather it could be finished in a short time. Mr. Freeman went to the surveyor-general's office at Oregon City to return the field notes of the surveys he had completed, and to get a contract for sub-divisions.

The camp was broken up and he discharged all his help, excepting Mr. Moody and myself. He authorized us to remain and await his return, and to board with a family, and see to the pack horses. In case it should become fair weather previous to his return, so the solar apparatus could be used to advantage. I could try to survey a new township line. I had not at that time undertaken to make any surveys with the solar compass, though I had been learning by observation about its workings.

The first week after Mr. Freeman's departure the weather continued cloudy or rainy the greater part of the time, and we could do no work on the township line, but one of the settlers desired me to make a survey of his claim, which was one mile square. This could be done by the needle. The lines were to be made to conform to the cardinal points, due north, south, east and west, but otherwise were not required to conform to the public surveys. I agreed to survey it for him, and after the

starting corner was pointed out, we began the work. This was my first experience in surveying any lengthy line, my experience having been on city lots. We were to survey around one square mile, making four equal 198 side, each one mile in length. Of course, I felt some nervousness about the closing. Should errors be made they would show at this point. About one-half of the land was in the prairie, and the balance in timber land.

I managed the compass, and Mr. Moody, with another man, were chainmen. The man for whom we were making the survey remarked that he supposed I had had a good deal of experience in that kind of work. I did not inform him that I was then engaged in making my maiden survey. When we had surveyed three sides of the quadrangle, and were running toward the starting point on the fourth, or last side, the owner began to predict about where we would come out in relation to the point of beginning.

He declared there would be quite a wide distance from the point of beginning. This, as was natural, caused me to be more nervous. However, I made no reply, and when the survey was completed, it proved to be a very satisfactory close. This gave me more confidence, and as another man near by desired a similar survey made, we made that with equal satisfaction.

About the second week of Mr. Freeman's absence the weather cleared up and the sun shone, and Mr. Moody and myself started the survey of the township line. I was compassman, as before, and assisted him in making the measurements with the chain. This was an east and west line, six miles long, and was run as a "random line," as they were called. All east and west lines were random lines, as at first surveyed, and were afterwards corrected according to the amount of error found in closing. Later I surveyed many township lines, but I 199 believe that was the most difficult one I ever surveyed. Soon after we commenced it we ran into the Santiam bottom and river, and the line followed the stream, crossing and recrossing almost the entire distance. The impassible parts of this line of six miles, which was measured by us by triangulations and offsets, amounted to very nearly, if not quite, one-half of its entire length.

It was a tedious and discouraging task for a beginner. But we worked upon it steadily, when the sun favored us, and at the end of nearly a week we reached the town corner. I had run a due west line, and at the end fell farther from the corner than I had expected. Consequently, I did not feel fully satisfied with the outcome of my work.

We did not correct the line, however, as I supposed Mr. Freeman would make a new survey when he should return. In fact, we had no time to correct the line, as Mr. Freeman returned after an absence of about two weeks. I explained to him what we had accomplished during his absence, and how the township line had closed. After he had made an examination of his field notes of the closing six miles farther north, he said it was really the best close that had been made on that contract, it having closed with less variation, as compared with the parallel line six miles north of it. We soon after finished the contract.

While at Oregon City Mr. Freeman took the contract to subdivide townships 9 and 10 S. range, I west; 8 and 9 S. range 2 W. and 9 S. range 3 W., it being a part of the townships of which we had surveyed the exterior lines. This contract was dated November 28, 1851.

200

After we had finished the first contract we began the subdivision. There were 60 miles of surveys of subdivisions in each township. At first I acted as one of the chainmen with Mr. Moody, and Mr. Freeman was compassman. Soon after we had started, however, Mr. Freeman asked me to relieve him so as to give him time to write up his field notes. The result was before we were half done I was compassman substantially all the time, and so continued until the contract was completed.

The winter of 1851-52 was quite a rainy one in Oregon, and some time during the rainy season Mr. Freeman concluded to dispense with the camp and depend upon the settlers for accommodations. Nearly all the settlers held their claims under the Donation Law, so called, passed by Congress September 27, 1850.

These claims principally consisted of 640 acres, equal to one square mile of land, which, when taking account of the lands unsettled, caused the residences to be at a considerable distance from each other, generally from one-half mile to three miles.

In some respects this arrangement of seeking accommodations with the settlers was satisfactory, and in other respects it was not. In many instances, after our work for the day had been completed, when we were wet and hungry, we were obliged to travel from two to four miles before reaching a house. The houses there at that time were log cabins, the great majority of which contained but one room, with perhaps a small "loft."

So, many times when we reached the first house after a long walk, and made the inquiry if we could be accommodated with supper, lodging and breakfast, or in 201 western language: "If we could get to stay over night?" the reply almost invariably would be: "We have no accommodations to keep folks." At the next house we probably could "get to stay," as they "kept folks." The estimate of the distance to the next house was almost invariably given at not more than one-half of the actual distance. When we at length arrived at the next house a similar story, in most cases, would be told, so that on some occasion we traveled until quite late in the evening before we could succeed in finding lodging for the night. The next morning we were obliged to retrace the same road to reach the place where we had quit work the evening previous. These people, however, were very hospitable and could not be censured with justice. A majority of them were immigrants from Missouri and other western states, and many of them had lived on the frontier during their whole lives.

In many cases where we stopped for the night, the cabin contained one room only, of a fair size, say 15 by 20 feet, and the family would consist of man and wife, and from five to ten children, in some instances including two or three girls nearly women grown. Of course, families so situated could not be expected to have accommodations for three or four tired, hungry men. However, in many cases we would prevail upon them to consent to keep us, and they would do the very best that they were able to do under the existing conditions.

They would divide their bed, putting the feather bed on the floor for the use of their guests. This was done for us in many instances. After managing in this way 202 for a time, and becoming familiar with the ways and manners of the people, I knew much better how to manage the matter of getting kept over night. I learned that if we should assume a simple “No” with excuses, more or less elaborate, was to be taken as a final refusal, that we would find very few places of accommodations.

Later I made it a point to get into the inside of the house before the request was made for accommodations for the night. I would not even await an invitation to step inside, but no sooner than the door was open I would at once enter, if possible, without being conspicuously ungentlemanly. Sometimes I would inquire for a drink of water and gain admission thereby. Once inside I found the battle more than half won. We could then almost always induce the good people to keep us.

The surveying of the public lands may be thought by many to be light, easy work, but it is really hard and rough. The surveyors are subjected to much exposure, especially in the winter or rainy season.

The winters in Oregon, as in California, are called “rainy seasons.” There is much rainy weather and some snow, but the snows are usually damp and soon melt away in the valleys. The weather is seldom very cold, but is sometimes cold enough to cause thin ice to form on the surface of standing water.

During the rainy season in Oregon the small streams were full and all the sloughs and swampy places were at times overflowed with water. At that time ferries had been established across some of the larger streams at certain points. The smaller streams had to be forded.

203

We had very much wading to do in crossing streams, sloughs and swamps, quite often having to wade places where the water was not less than three or four feet deep. The water was necessarily cold, but after a few days of experience we would become accustomed to it, so we would not mind

it very much. When a pair of new boots were purchased, before they were worn, a slit would be made in each one, near the sole, at the inside of the instep to give drainage for the water to pass out. We had a great amount of similar wading to do on this contract.

I will relate only one from many experiences which came my way during the fall of 1851. When Mr. Freeman was surveying the meridian line, he had a transit with his party, to make triangulations to distant mountain peaks and other topographical objects that might come within range on either side.

This transit, from a fall or some other accident, became injured, so it became entirely useless for the purpose of making triangulations, and it was left by Mr. Freeman at a farmhouse. Previous to his visit to Oregon City in November, he concluded to take the transit along with him to the surveyor-general's office.

One morning he desired me to go for the instrument and bring it to camp. He gave me the name of the man where it had been left, and the location of the house was pointed out on the plan. As I remember, the location was about twelve or fourteen miles distant.

Our camp was to be removed on that day, so that on my return it would be necessary for me to pursue a different course from the one in going. I started and found 204 the house without difficulty, and after partaking of some dinner and settling all bills due the proprietor, I started in the direction of which I expected to find our camp. In my journey to the house I found a comparatively dry road, and was not obliged to go through any deep water.

It was considerably into the afternoon when I started on the home journey and I did not suppose I would be able to reach camp that evening, but concluded to take the chances of finding a house where I could remain over night. After traveling two or three miles I reached a stream of considerable depth, which I waded, coming out pretty thoroughly soaked. A short distance farther on I entered a large prairie. The weather was cloudy, but it did not rain very much. I kept on and was able to pursue the proper course by the help of the instrument, until it became dark, when a dense fog settled down upon the plain. I could see only a short distance and was not able to see to

read the bearing of the needle of the transit. I had no other guide to direct my course except a very slight movement of the atmosphere, which was scarcely perceptible.

However, I kept the course as well as I was able to do, thinking the most probable outcome would be that I would be obliged to remain on the prairie until the next morning.

Some time between eight and nine o'clock in the evening, I heard the low of a cow at my left, at about a right angle with the course I was then traveling. I immediately shaped my course toward the point from which the sound came, supposing there would be a 205 farmhouse in that vicinity. I soon came upon a little trail or road, which I followed, but I had not gone a great distance before I came to a slough, at that time filled with water. As the weather had been quite cool, the water was frozen over to the thickness of half an inch. I waded into the water where the trail entered it, and broke my way through the ice. Before I reached the opposite side, I found the water nearly four feet deep, and it was no easy task to break the ice so as to make my way through.

After a time I reached the opposite side and soon after saw a dim light through the fog. I went in the direction of the light and soon reached a house, where the inmates had retired for the night. I found the people to be very hospitable. The good lady of the house arose and prepared a supper for me, and during the night dried my wet clothing before the fire. The next morning I traveled to camp.

We completed the contract about the first of March and immediately after went to Oregon City. The pay at this time for chainmen, axemen and campmen on the surveys was about two dollars a day. Mr. Freeman paid me a larger compensation, but I do not remember the price. After our arrival at Oregon City, Mr. Elder said to me that he had resigned his position as chief clerk at the office of the surveyor-general, and should go on the field work. He was to have a contract, and desired me to work in his employ. I agreed to do so.

He received a contract dated March 25, 1852. This contract was for the survey of the exterior lines of townships 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 south, of range 3 and 4 west, with 206 a part of the first standard parallel south. This amounted to about 120 miles of surveys at \$17 a mile.



This contract was principally in the Yamhill valley, westerly and southwesterly from Oregon City. The work was all within 25 miles of the surveyor-general's office.

Mr. Elder had procured me a solar compass, for which I paid him \$350.

We began the contract about the first of April and finished it near the end of May. I was compassman on substantially all the lines of the contract, while Mr. Elder wrote the field notes and made the plats.

I received a commission as a United States deputy surveyor, April 25, 1852, from John B. Preston, surveyor-general of Oregon.

As soon as the contract was completed we went to Oregon City, and Mr. Elder proposed that my name should be associated with his in a contract for subdivisions, so as to be able to obtain a contract of ten townships, instead of five, the number usually awarded to one deputy in a single contract.

I was to work for him and have charge of one party, while he would have charge of a second party. I agreed to this. The contract to Elder & Webster was dated June 8, 1852, and was for the subdivisions of townships 3 and 5 south range, 2 west; 1, 3, 4 and 5 south range, 3 west; and 2, 3, 4 and 5 south range, 4 west. This included all the townships, with two exceptions, of which we had made the surveys of the exterior lines, and included two townships in range 2 which had been surveyed by Deputy William Ives. The number of miles 207 contained in the contract to be surveyed was estimated at 660. The subdivisions, or interior lines of a township, amount to about 60 miles, provided there are no streams or lakes to be measured. All stream considered navigable are measured on both sides.

In this contract were portions of the Willamette and the Yamhill Rivers, which were measured.

We left Oregon City on or about June 9th. We made up two parties. Mr. Elder managed one party and I the other. In my party were Henry S. Gile, from Alfred, Maine, a very intelligent man, who

acted as one of my chainmen; James M. Fudge from Sangamon county, Illinois, also a very fine young man (he was killed by the explosion of a steamboat boiler a short distance above the falls at Oregon City, in the spring of 1854); Andrew Murphy, an intelligent Irish-American citizen from St. Louis, Mo.; and James o'Connor, as compassman. The last named was an inhabitant of Oregon, a young man. At this time I do not remember the names of Mr. Elder's party with the exception of Matthew Murphy, a brother to Andrew, and who assisted Mr. Elder in the management of the compass before the contract was completed.

We had good working forces on this contract and consequently had a very pleasant time. I made considerably more than half of the surveys with my party.

We were engaged on this contract about four months, or until about the 8th of October, when we went to Oregon City and made up our field notes and plats, and returned them to the surveyor-general's office. Mr. Elder paid me something more than \$100 a month for my work.

208

My health had continued good all through the summer, until just previous to the time of finishing of the contract, when I was taken ill but managed to lead my party and do my work until the survey was completed.

After we went to Oregon City I did not improve. I procured some medicine once or twice from an English physician. Mr. Elder said I was afflicted with a fever of some kind, and I thought later that probably he was right. Be that as it may, I was quite sick for three or four weeks, although I was out more or less every day during the whole time. Finally, I began to improve, and about the first of December I had nearly recovered my usual good health.

Up to this time I had had no contract on my own account, but it was understood that I should receive a contract of subdivisions for winter. This was under President Filmore's administration and of course Mr. Preston, the surveyor-general was a Whig, politically, as was Mr. Elder.

One day when I was in the surveyor-general's office, Mr. Preston called me into his private office and inquired in regard to my politics. This surprised me as I had supposed he knew, and I could not help wondering how much bearing my reply would have in awarding me a contract. I immediately said I was a Democrat, and asked if that would make any difference about awarding me a contract.

He said it would not with him, but with surveyor-generals generally a distinction was made, and contracts were only awarded to deputies of their own political faith.

#### SEAL OF CALIFORNIA IN ITS EARLIER DAYS.

209

Mr. Preston was a fine man, and had always been very kind to me. I never knew the object of his making the inquiry, but I afterwards supposed he did it to test my honesty, and to see if I would equivocate in any way in relation to my political principles. If I had pursued such a course it is possible I might not have fared as well as I did. He said that a majority of his deputies were Democrats. Mr. Freeman, William Ives, and his brother, Butler Ives, and Joseph Hunt were all of that party.

He awarded me a contract, No. 27, dated December 1, 1852, for the subdivisions of township No. 14 south, ranges 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 west, estimated at 315 miles, at \$10 per mile.

I made up my party and left Oregon City about a week later, going up the River Willamette on a steamer to Salem, where I had arranged to have the "pack horses" meet us, and where we camped near the river. A storm began soon after we arrived at Salem, and it continued for two or three days, so it was impracticable to attempt to move up the valley until the rain should cease. Our work was about 50 miles southerly from Salem.

After three or four days the weather became fair and pleasant, and we packed up our camp and moved southerly up the valley of the Willamette.

The river, with all the streams, was very much swollen from the recent rains, and we were obliged to do considerable wading, some of which was quite deep. As I had but a short time previously recovered from quite a 210 severe illness, and had not been so exposed for several weeks, I took cold.

I felt the cold quite severely on the first night out from Salem. On the second evening I had, as I believe, as severe a cold as I ever experienced in my whole life. After the other men had turned in for the night I inquired if any one of them had anything that would cure a cold. One of them replied that he had some cayenne pepper in his valise and told me where I could find it, and he told me that a teaspoonful in hot water was a proper dose. After heating some water I put in a tablespoonful of the cayenne, stirred it thoroughly, and drank dregs and all. I am now convinced it was the warmest dose I ever drank, but I immediately laid down for the night, and when I arose the next morning, my cold had nearly disappeared. It troubled me very little afterward. This, I believe, was the only serious cold I experienced while in Oregon.

We were about three days in making the trip from Salem and we began work December 17, in township No. 14 south, range 3, west. The Willamette River ran through township 14, range 4 and 5, west. The Callapooza, a small river, also passed through some of the townships.

There was much rainy weather through the last part of December, and also during January, 1853, all the streams and swales being full of water.

I don't recollect the names of the men who made up my party, with the exception of one, whose name was McDonald. Whenever we got into a hard place, he was always complaining, and would say that he should quit 211 work. He was not the sort of a man I desired, but I did not wish to have him leave, as he had a sympathizer in the party who would be pretty sure to leave if he did, and that would break up my gang. It would probably trouble me to supply their places at that time.

We finished one township on January 3, and commenced upon the one next west in range 4. The Willamette River intersected the western boundary of this township, which it crossed four times,

and also crossed its south boundary. We had completed about two-thirds of the easterly part of this township when one day it became necessary to cross the Willamette River and bring out a line before we could make any farther progress.

I made some inquiries of some of the settlers in relation to a boat, and learned of a man nearby who owned a “dugout,” but upon seeing him he declared it would be impossible to cross the river in its swollen condition. We went to the river where the boat was located and the situation for crossing did really look to be somewhat dangerous to be undertaken at that time with such a craft. I had many times used similar boats to cross streams.

A “dugout” is a boat made from a log, being dug out, as its name implies, and many of them are not very steady on the water, overturning very easily. This was one of the unsteady kind, and the river at the point where the boat lay at that time was very rapid. A short distance below was the upper end of an island, against which a large quantity of drift timber had lodged and against which the current was lashing itself with great force. After considering the situation for a few moments I concluded that I could make the crossing, as I was obliged to do, or await the fall of the river. The boat was so small and frail that it was not safe for us all to undertake to cross at one time. I said to the men of the party that I could take them safely over, as I believed, provided they would do just as I should command them, and not become frightened. I said also that we must cross the river or lie still until the freshet should subside, which might be several days; that I would leave it to them to decide whether to go or not, as it was, as I knew, attended with some danger to make the attempt to cross.

Possibly we might meet with some accident, and if so, we probably would fare hard. They concluded to make the attempt. I took two men into the boat with me, together with the instruments. The men sat on the bottom of the boat to steady it, and after giving them their instructions, I pulled the boat into the current. Though the passage was difficult we went safely across to the other side of the river. But our troubles had only begun. The lowlands along the river were overflowed to a depth of several feet; in places it was so deep that it was impossible to wade it, so that it was necessary to make triangulations. The country was timbered, and brushy, and the lines crossed the island.

We were wading in the water nearly all day. I believe now, considering the water, brush and all the conditions there present, it was the most difficult line of equal length that I encountered on all the surveys I made while in Oregon.

213

It crossed the river at a little more than one-half mile from the corner at which we began, and we worked in the water nearly the entire day, but got the line across before night.

At the time when we were wading in the deep cold water, Mr. McDonald began to complain as usual, and said he would quit the job. I was feeling a little out of patience myself, and I said to him that he had been saying about the same thing whenever we got into a hard place, and that I had become tired of hearing it. I advised him either to stop such talk or quit at once. He replied that he would quit after that day. I said, "all right." The next morning when we prepared to start for our work, he said to me that he supposed I understood he was to quit work. I remarked that I had heard him say as much when we were in the water the day previous, but that I had concluded that probably he had changed his mind in the meantime. He went to work again and continued for several days, when he concluded to quit, and his companion went with him.

This broke up our party, when it was near the first of February. My contract at that date was less than one-half completed. As I was getting short of supplies that were impossible to procure from the settlers, I sent the campman with the horses to Albany, it being about twenty-five miles northerly, down the Willamette valley, and gave him orders to procure such supplies as were needed, and to hire two good men. I remained alone in an unfinished log house while he was absent, about one week, and was engaged in copying my field notes. He returned with provisions and brought along with him 214 two men that proved themselves to be very good help. After this time we had much better weather, and also an improved party. I finished the contract about the 25th of March, and went to Oregon City with my returns.

Before my return to Oregon City, Mr. Elder had arranged for a double contract in the Umqua valley, and had the name of Harry S. Gile associated with his own in a similar way that he had my name used in the contract a year previous.

As at that time I could have no contract of my own until later, Mr. Elder suggested that I go with him to the Umqua valley. As Mr. Gile had had but little experience as a compassman I could help him survey the township lines, and return in season to get a contract of my own, which would probably be available later. I at once agreed to his proposition.

The location of the contract was about 150 miles south of Oregon City on an air line, and included the best part of the Umqua valley. It consisted of eight or ten townships, both the exterior and interior lines, or between 700 and 800 miles of surveys.

We left Oregon City for Umqua about the middle of April, 1853. It was a good country to survey, and Mr. Elder made it well. I remained until the contract was completed, some time near September 1st, or between four and five months.

I surveyed the larger part of the township lines and considerably more than one-half of the subdivision. Mr. Gile worked one party, and I the other, while Mr. Elder copied the field notes and drew the maps.

A short time previous to the completion of the 215 contract. Mr. Elder proposed to me that if I would remain and complete the work, he would go to the surveyor-general's office at Oregon City and get a large contract in the Rouge River valley, the same to be a company contract for Mr. Elder and myself.

The Rouge River valley was about seventy-five miles south-easterly from the place where we were then at work, and the understanding was to move our parties over there from the Umqua country, and thus save the breaking up of the parties. I at once consented to the proposition, and Mr. Elder

was to start for Oregon City at once, both of us feeling certain he would be able to procure the contract.

Before he had started, however, we received information that an Indian war had broken out at the Rouge River valley. That put a stop to our proposed contract. Of course, we could do no surveying during an Indian war. The war continued during the succeeding three or four months.

General Joe Lane was then in Oregon, and with the United States regular army that was stationed there, together with volunteers, he secured peace. But a large number of the white inhabitants lost their lives during the outbreak. It happened very fortunate for our surveying party that it did not occur a month later, when we should probably have been surveying in that valley, and probably some of us would have lost our scalps.

The war was said to have been caused by the abuse of the daughter of the chief by some gold miners who were at work on Rouge River, and as the perpetrators of the foul deed immediately left the place, so that the 216 chief could not punish the guilty parties, he made preparations to exterminate all the white people then in the valley. Nothing was known in relation to his intentions by the whites until his arrangements were completed.

One day when all was in readiness, as he supposed, the Indians commenced shooting down the whites indiscriminately in Jacksonville, the principal village of the Rouge River settlement. In this instance, as in one or two other Indian outbreaks that I knew something about while I was in the Indian country, the trouble was caused by ill treatment of the Indians by the whites, and I firmly believe the same, or similar causes, have produced similar results in the great majority of Indian wars and massacres since the discovery of America by Columbus. It is my opinion that the poor Indian—naturally a noble race of men—have been most shamefully and wickedly abused and mistreated.

I will give just one instance that came under my observation, as an illustration. In Oregon City I became acquainted with a man by the name of Angel. About the time the Rouge River gold mines were discovered and began to be worked, Mr. Angel concluded to remove there. Previous to his



removal, as I was talking with him in relation to the matter, he said he was the owner of a good rifle, and that Indians were quite plentiful in the Rouge River country. He said he intended to shoot the first Rouge River Indian that he should see after his arrival at that place.

I had some argument with him in regard to the justice or propriety of committing such an act, but he persisted that his mind was fully settled, and he would certainly <sup>217</sup> do that deed, provided he should have an opportunity. When I was fully convinced that he was truly in earnest, or appeared to be so, I said to him, that should he do as he said he would do, and murder an innocent, unoffensive Indian in cold blood, it was my wish that he would also be shot by an Indian.

Mr. Angel removed to Rouge River, and I later learned that he shot three or four Indians at different times, while he was standing in his own doorway, and that he made a boast of it, but that he was killed during the Rouge River Indian outbreak. Provided I had the truth of the matter, I certainly believe he received his just deserts. Poor Mr. Angel!

We had a pleasant time while engaged upon the Umqua contract, and after it was completed we returned to Oregon City. Mr. Elder paid me \$185 a month for the time I was employed, nearly five months.

One incident that I failed to relate in its proper place I will insert here. When writing in relation to the work on the contract in the winter of 1852-3, I wrote that I sent the campman to Albany, where he hired two men.

One of these men had had very sore eyes, from which he had not fully recovered. He said it was his opinion the disease was contagious, as he believed he had contracted it from another person. A short time previous to the finishing of that contract, one of my eyes felt as though some foreign substance was in it. I endeavored to remove it, but with no good results. The eye soon became inflamed and troubled me badly. Within two or three days later the other eye was affected in a similar manner as the first. They were in bad condition and <sup>218</sup> troubled me much. After I had completed the contract and went to Oregon City my eyes did not improve, but steadily grew worse. I could not bear the light without pain, and many times in the evening after the hotel was lighted,

it caused me such suffering I would go outside and walk the dark streets. In the morning my eyes would be fairly glued together, and it would be impossible for me to open them until I had removed the sticky substance and open them with my fingers.

I applied to the English physician I have previously mentioned, and he gave me some salve, which he directed me to apply at night. I applied it as directed. It seemed almost like putting fire into my eyes. After I had applied it for two or three nights, my eyes instead of improving, as I had reason to suppose they would do, became worse, and in the morning after I had succeeded in getting my eyes open I threw the box of salve into the street. From that time my eyes began to improve. I wore colored glasses for a time to protect them.

When I left Oregon City for the Umqua with Mr. Elder, although my eyes had improved some, they were very sensitive to light. They continued to improve, but when I commenced work they troubled me greatly. I could see double—that is, I could see two objects where there was only one. Suppose I was looking at a man some distance away, I would seem to see two men, instead of one.

However, my eyes continued to improve slowly but steadily, and at length regained their normal condition, so far as my sight was concerned. Still it was a long time before they became strong, so as to bear any excessive light without causing me pain, and it is my opinion they were never quite so strong after that time as they had been previously.

At the presidential election that took place in November, 1852, Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire was elected president of the United States. This caused a change in the national administration from Whig to Democratic. After I arrived at Oregon City from the Umqua valley, Mr. Preston said to me that he supposed that Mr. Pierce would send a man there to take his place as surveyor-general, and that he would be removed from the office. He also said that as I had been crowded out of a contract in the previous spring, which I was really entitled to, he would give me my first choice of a contract from any of the lands at that time available to be surveyed.

After we had examined the plans, I selected for a contract the country west of the Willamette River, including the Long Tom valley. The contract was dated September 19, 1853, and included the

survey of the 4th standard parallel south of range 5 and 6 west, the township lines of townships No. 16, 17 and 18, south of range No. 5 west, and 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18, south of range No. 6 west, or so much of these as was suitable for settlement, estimated at 369 miles, at \$12 per mile. The west line of some of these townships ran into the coast range of mountains, and included some lands that were unfit for cultivation. This was the largest single contract, as I believe, that had been awarded to any deputy in Oregon. It proved to be a good contract, notwithstanding I had some very difficult township lines to 220 survey in the mountains. Instead of the surveys amounting to 396 miles, there were 486 miles of surveys. In making the surveys of the public lands the deputy contracts to do the work at a certain price per mile; employ and pay his own help, and also pay all expenses. We paid help at that time each by the day and paid for the time only that we were able to work, on account of good or bad weather.

As soon as practicable after the contract was signed, I made up my party and left Oregon City, September 23, 1853. My party consisted of A. M. Addington and Granville Blake, chainmen, and John E. Boyd and Joseph Hawkins. All were from the western states.

I began work on the survey September 28. The weather was fair for the most part until the 13th of October, and it was not very stormy and bad through November.

The west line of the west tier of townships for nearly its entire length, or thirty miles, was in the coast range of mountains. It was very difficult to survey. The spurs and ravines made it up or down nearly the whole distance. Much of the way it was very steep. The mountains were heavily timbered. To survey these lines it was necessary to pack some provisions and take along. When night came we would build a fire, and after partaking of such eatables as we had managed to carry with us, lie down to sleep. To survey the two lines of a township in this broken country usually kept us in the mountains three or four days at a time, and we would carry with us provisions sufficient to last that length of time. Each one would carry his own pack.

Before the middle of October we had completed the lines of the three townships of range 5, which was in a fine country to survey, and had made some progress upon the other range. In cloudy weather we worked upon the subdivisions. There was considerable cloudy and rainy weather in November, while December proved still worse. I completed the subdivisions of the three townships of range 5, and on December 9th went to Marysville and copied my field notes, as the weather was so cloudy and stormy that I could not work to any advantage. I returned from Marysville December 21, and worked a few days, when there came a snow storm. The snow fell to the depth of ten or twelve inches and it was light and dry like a New England snow in mid-winter. It cleared away cold, and we had really a New Hampshire winter for about two weeks. The snow blew and ice formed over the streams and other exposed waters six or eight inches in thickness. This was a very unusual occurrence for Oregon.

This state of affairs continued for more than two weeks, or until the 27th of January, when it became warm, and the snow soon melted away.

During the cold spell we could do no work at surveying, but keep ourselves as comfortable as possible in our tent.

In December and January we worked only twenty-seven and one-half days. February was a better month, but we had some stormy weather.

I finished the contract April 21, 1854, just seven months from the time of its date. We worked 133 days on the field work and averaged very nearly three miles for 222 each working day. After the contract was completed we started for Oregon City, leaving all the camp equipage, blankets, etc., with a man near Albany, going by the Willamette on a steamer. When I arrived at Oregon City, Colonel Gardiner was in the office as the new surveyor-general of Oregon Territory, Mr. Preston having been deposed during the winter. Mr. Preston had remained in the place and had opened a private land office. Colonel Gardiner was a good man in his place, but he knew very little in regard to the public land surveys. As Mr. Preston was a practical engineer and surveyor, it was a poor exchange in a practical sense.

I copied and returned my field notes and plats to the office. At this time, my friend, Mr. Elder, had returned to his home in Illinois, and Mr. James E. Freeman had gone to California and was employed on the public surveys there. After my work on the field notes and maps was completed, which kept me busy for a considerable time, I was one day near the Willamette below Oregon City a short distance picking some strawberries for pastime, when a gentleman accosted me and inquired if my name was Webster. I replied that it was. He said he was agent for some coal mines on Bellingham Bay, at the north end of Puget Sound, near the British boundary and opposite to Vancouver Island. He represented a company in New York, and had come to Oregon City for a surveyor to go there and make a survey of the land upon which the mines were located. He went to the surveyor-general's office, where I had been recommended to him, and he asked me if I would go with him and do the work.

223

I agreed to do the job, which was a matter of a few days' work only, after we should have reached the place. He was to return to Olympia, situated at the head of Puget Sound, immediately, where I was to meet him.

I started on the trip June 11th, and went down the Willamette to Portland in a steamer. From Portland I boarded another steamer and traveled down the Willamette and Columbia Rivers about 70 miles to the mouth of the Cowlitz River. From this point I went up the Cowlitz River in an Indian canoe, propelled by two or three Indian men with poles, about 35 or 40 miles, as far as the Cowlitz Farms Landing. From Cowlitz Landing I rode horse back 50 or 60 miles to Olympia, at the head of Puget Sound, where I arrived June 16.

At Olympia I learned the agent had gone ahead down the Sound, and had left instructions for me to follow with the mail carrier to Alki Point, near the present site of Seattle, about 60 miles from Olympia, where he proposed to meet me.

We left Olympia in the afternoon in a small skiff, and made a landing at Steilacoom for the night. This was about 20 miles from Olympia. Upon reaching Alki Point early the next morning I met the

agent, who had engaged three Indians with a large Indian cedar canoe to take us to Bellingham Bay, which I believe was about 100 miles northerly.

On leaving Oregon City I had heard of an Indian outbreak at Puget Sound, and I learned that there had been an attack at Bellingham Bay. I was advised to abandon the trip, but I had resolved to keep ahead.

224

Two other men, friends of the agent, went with us from Alki Point (Seattle), which, including the three Indians, made seven in our party. After leaving Alki Point we encountered some dangerous experiences with our canoe on the Sound and got thoroughly drenched with water several times, but the Indians succeeded in keeping the cedar canoe right side up.

At length we reached Bellingham Bay, which I believe was the same location where the city of Whatcom, Washington, is now situated. When we arrived we found five or six men, which was all the inhabitants then residing in that vicinity. They occupied a small log cabin, which was the only building within many miles.

This was the exact location where two men of the same party had been killed by the Indians a short time previous. The door of the cabin was literally riddled with bullets.

The trouble had been with the Indians from up the British coast, near Fort Snelling. It was a very intellectual tribe of red men, who were tall and well proportioned, with a skin almost as white as many of the white race.

A number of the Indians had been employed for a considerable time at one of the sawmills along the sound, and had been very satisfactory laborers, when for some cause they concluded to quit work. The proprietor refused to pay them the amount due at that time unless they should continue. A dispute arose, when the proprietor drew his revolver and shot one of the Indians dead on the spot. The other Indians immediately left for their homes. This caused the trouble.

## WARSHIP PORTSMOUTH WHICH CARRIED THE AMERICAN FLAG INTO SAN FRANCISCO IN 1846.

225

The chief of the tribe fitted out a war party and they came down the coast to the sound in large war canoes, and at once created a general alarm at the settlements all along the sound. These war canoes were made from giant cedar logs, and neatly and elaborately ornamented. Some were of sufficient capacity to carry 50 warriors, each one with a paddle.

The men at the coal camp at Whatcom had heard of the danger and had taken the precaution to keep out a guard at night, two at a time. They supposed the Indians would approach them by water in case they made an attack, consequently they adopted the plan of keeping guard in a boat, anchored a short distance from shore.

On the night of the attack, two men were on guard in the boat as usual, when the men in the cabin heard shots at the landing, only a few rods distant. Thoroughly alarmed they took to the brush for safety. The Indians fired many shots into the house, but the men had made their escape. The two men on guard were supposed to have been surprised and killed, but their bodies had not been discovered when I was there. One evening about sunset we heard much shooting out in the bay, but it was too far away for us to see so as to ascertain the cause. We supposed it to be a war party of the Indians, which was later learned to be the fact. They were exchanging shots with some men in boats.

That night we expected an attack at our exposed camp, and we were all armed and prepared to defend ourselves as well as possible under the conditions. But they did not trouble us and we heard nothing further from them during our stay.

226

I completed the survey as was desired. As I now remember I surveyed two square miles of land, on which the coal mines cropped out. After the surveys were completed we left Whatcom on our return, and arrived at Steilacoom on the evening of the 3d of July, 1854. Here we celebrated

Independence day and remained until the 5th, after which I returned to Oregon City over the same route I had traveled when on my way out, having been absent about twenty-eight days.

After my return Colonel Gardiner, the surveyor-general, offered me the work to finish the remainder of a contract somewhere in the northern part of the territory, upon which a deputy had been at work and had failed to finish it. So far as I was able to learn in regard to it, it was located in a rough, brushy, timbered country, and was not a desirable piece of work.

Yet, as I learned, the deputy who first took the contract and undertook to do the work, did not attend to his business as he should have done, which was probably the real cause of his failure.

227

## CHAPTER XI.

### HOMEWARD BOUND

I was satisfied that I could make the work pay me some profit, but it was not a very desirable contract. Still, if I refused to accept this offer from Colonel Gardiner, I could not afterwards consistently ask him for a better contract. If I should accept it and finish the work, I might later be in a position to receive a better offer from him. The most desirable country in Oregon, lying west of the Cascade mountains, had already been surveyed, or was under contract.

At first I was undecided which course to pursue. It seemed to be a turning point in my life. Should I engage to do the work, I might perhaps remain in Oregon for years to come, and possibly never return home. At that time it was about five years and three months since I had left home, and I had learned that the longer the absence was continued, the less strong my desire to return. But I soon came to a decision to go back to my old New Hampshire home, if for nothing more than a visit.

I thought that perhaps this was as good an opportunity to do so as would offer itself in the near future. Consequently, I made arrangements with Mr. Preston to draw the money for the balance of the surveys for which I had not yet been paid, and to forward the same to me at Hudson, N. H., my



home. After having been a resident of the territory of Oregon for some more than 228 three years, I left Portland for San Francisco in the steamer Columbia, which was the same vessel that brought me to Oregon.

To convey a faint conception of the many vicissitudes of the surveyors employed in making the surveys upon the public lands of the United States in sparsely settled regions, I will relate two or three incidents from many similar experiences which occurred while I was engaged upon the public surveys of Oregon.

One morning while making surveys of township lines, previous to leaving camp I gave the campmen their orders (I had two at that time) to move the camp during the day six miles east, or as near that point as they could find wood and water for camp purposes.

We were to start from the township corner that morning, and survey a line due east. Provided it should prove a good country for surveying, we could nearly or quite reach the opposite township corner, a distance of six miles, where I had ordered the campmen to pitch camp.

This was in the late autumn when the days were short, and at that season we took no lunch with us. The usual time for us to finish breakfast and leave camp in the morning was as early as sunrise.

On the day mentioned, our line was principally through a timbered and brushy country, so when night came we had completed but three and one-half miles.

Just before it began to grow dark, we left the survey and started east, expecting to find our camp within two or three miles. We had traveled about that distance when we came to a wagon trail or road, the course of 229 which was nearly north and south, and near which was plenty of wood and water. We hallooed, as was our custom, to attract the attention of the campmen, but received no reply.

Under ordinary conditions we could be heard at least one mile, and sometimes, when conditions were more favorable, nearly or quite two miles. As we heard no reply from the campmen, we

followed the road south about three miles, but could hear nothing from our camp. We then retraced our steps to the point at which we first intersected the road, and followed it in the opposite, or northerly direction, for about an equal distance, but could hear no reply to our calls, when we felt certain the camp could not be in that direction.

We again retraced our way to about the point at which we had at first intersected the road. We had seen no house on that day.

It was then about eleven o'clock at night. I saw a place by the roadside where there was an abundance of dry wood, and I said to the party that I should camp there for the night. They all concluded to adopt a similar course. We started a good blaze and remained near it until morning.

When morning came we started to find either our camp or some house. One of the men went with me, and we traveled in a southerly direction. The two other men went in another direction.

About ten o'clock in the forenoon we came to a small cabin. We entered it and found a man there who was living alone. I asked him if he could prepare something eatable for us, as we had eaten nothing since early in the morning on the day previous. He replied he was alone and that he could do nothing for us. I said to him: "Have you any provisions of any kind about your house?" His reply was that he had a little. I said that "we *must* have some of such as you have," and that if he did not produce it for us himself we would help ourselves to such as we might be able to find about the house. He at once kindled a fire and prepared us a dinner, but it was near noon before our meal was in readiness. Previous to the time our dinner was in readiness the other two men made their appearance, and they had become so much exhausted and faint for the want of food, they had been eating the barks and roots of trees.

The next day I commenced work again without looking for camp any farther, but selected a line in another direction, which was through a country with settlements.

We worked three or four days, stopping at the houses for accommodations at night, before we heard anything from camp. Then the campmen found us, and I afterwards learned, although they would

not admit it at that time, that instead of going six miles east, they traveled six miles south, and camped about nine miles from the point where they were ordered to go.

On another occasion, at the time I was engaged in running a party for Mr. Elder, upon going to camp one evening when it was nearly dark, we followed a line into a brushy bottom, to correct a quarter section post that had been set on a random line by the other party at work for Mr. Elder. One man accompanied me, who was present with the other party when the post was located. We followed the surveyed line and found the post 231 without difficulty, and made the necessary correction, marking witness trees, etc.

At that time we knew the location of our camp, as it was not to be removed on that day. It was not more than a mile distant in a straight line. To follow the line back, upon which we had come, until we should reach the open land, and then go to camp would double the distance to be traveled.

The man with me proposed to take the short cut through the brush, and claimed to know the way as he had been over the same route with the other party. It was becoming quite dark, and I consented to his leadership, against my better judgment, which was something I seldom did, to follow another in the woods.

The route was very brushy, with much fallen timber, and being quite dark, our progress was slow. We continued to travel, making our way through the tangled brush as best we could. At length we came to a small river, from which we drank some water, and where we rested for a short time.

It being dark, it was impossible to read the bearing from the instrument. It was my opinion that we had not traveled altogether in a direct line. My companion desired to cross the stream, but I was convinced that we were on the same side as was our camp.

We again started and traveled until about eleven o'clock, previous to which I had utterly abandoned all hope of reaching camp on that night. As we came to a tall white fir tree, I said to my companion that I should camp under that tree for the night, as I believed we had traveled in a circle, at least to some extent, and 232 there was no possibility for us to reach camp before daylight. He didn't agree

with my opinion, and he claimed we had traveled nearly in a straight line. He thought that we must be near camp, and left me, expecting to reach camp within a short time.

I climbed the tree, probably to a height of nearly 100 feet, to break off some twigs, on which to lie down for the remainder of the night. I remained in the tree for a considerable time, listening to the noise that came from my companion as he made his way through the brush. His progress was slow, as ours had been, and I could distinctly hear the brush crack, but instead of keeping a straight line, as he supposed he was doing, he soon began to bear away to the left in a curved line. He continued to circle to the left, but not for once did he pass beyond my hearing.

In about three-quarters of an hour after he left me, I could hear him approaching from nearly the opposite direction from that in which he had started. I descended the tree and awaited his approach. When he had reached a point within a few rods of me, he hallooed. I answered his call. He seemed surprised and came to me. His first question was how I came there. It was some time before I could convince him of the fact that I had remained during his absence at the same place where he had last parted from me.

He thought he had traveled in a straight line, and when he first heard my voice in answer to his call, he believed he was almost in camp. When he became convinced that he had passed around in a circle, and had made no progress toward camp, he seemed to be 233 satisfied to remain with me until morning. The next morning I led the way to camp without any difficulty, where we arrived shortly after breakfast time, having been without food for some more than twenty-four hours.

These are sample or specimen cases, and many other similar, more or less varied experiences could be related, if space would permit, such as sleeping out in the mountains in the winter season, with one blanket only, with a cold drenching rain falling all through the night. I have awakened to find myself completely covered with snow two or three inches in depth, with the exception of my face.

At that time there were roaming in the coast and cascade ranges of mountains and valleys numerous wild animals, such as grizzly and black bears, cougars or mountain lions, wild cats, gray wolves

and coyotes, deer, moose and many other species of animals. There were also two or three kinds of rattlesnakes.

Sometimes we would approach within sight of one of the animals, which would seem to be pleased to increase its distance between us as rapidly as possible. They are savage, ferocious animals when aroused, but when they are respected and passed at a distance without being interfered with in any way, they are seemingly not to be feared. To keep peace with them, their rights as monarchs of the forests should always be respected.

In San Francisco I met Mr. James E. Freeman, who was about to start on a survey of the public lands of California, and he desired me to assist him in doing the work. He offered me a salary of ten dollars per day and board for the entire time we should be absent from San Francisco in completing the work of the contract. I considered that to be a very liberal offer, and I hesitated before declining it. However, as I had made a start for home, and my mind had been fully decided in that direction, I concluded not to make a change.

I also found my uncle, Alfred Cummings, in San Francisco, occupied with carpenter work, and he had concluded to go home with me.

San Francisco had greatly increased in size and population, and had improved its condition during my absence. I remained there eight or ten days awaiting the departure of a steamer for Panama.

We left San Francisco near the end of July and took passage on the steamer Yankee Blade. Before reaching Panama the coal became exhausted, and we landed on a small, uninhabited island, where wood was cut and carried aboard the vessel in boats for fuel, in order to complete the voyage. We were then within two or three days sail of Panama.

In due time we reached Panama, where we landed and remained over night. At that time the Panama railroad had been completed from Aspinwall to a point about nine miles distant from the town of Panama, and near the summit of the isthmus. We left Panama the next morning, riding

on mules, which were provided us by the steamship company, anticipating that we would reach Aspinwall, on the Atlantic shore, and board the steamer for New York that evening.

We reached the end of the railroad without any undue delay, and boarded a train of cars for Aspinwall, but from some cause or causes, to the passengers unknown, 235 there were many delays, and our progress on that day was quite discouraging. We were sidetracked for the night, but a few miles distant from the point of starting, and the engine left us, word being given out that the cars would not move until morning. I procured something to eat at a small restaurant, and slept for the night upon the table at the same place. In the morning we supposed we were to go directly through to Aspinwall, but similar delays to those experienced the day preceding occurred, and when night came we were again sidetracked only a few miles distant from the place we spent the night previous, and at a distance from any place where we could procure refreshments. The patience of the passengers had become almost exhausted.

There were no conveniences for sleeping in the cars. They were full of passengers and the atmosphere was very bad, caused by poor ventilation.

Some time during the early part of the night I went to the rear platform of one of the cars and laid down and soon fell asleep. This was a platform I supposed the passengers would not use to pass over when going out or into the cars.

During the night some one in passing out in the darkness came in contact with me, which caused me to awake, and I spoke to him. He told me if I should continue to lie there in the night air, with no covering, I should almost certainly contract the deadly Panama fever. I replied that I would take the risk, and again fell asleep and enjoyed a very comfortable rest for the night. The next day the train took us through to Aspinwall with but little delay.

What caused the necessity to detain several hundreds of passengers in a train of cars for three days and two nights while traveling a distance of less than fifty miles, and where there was very little accommodation for refreshments or sleep, I could never comprehend.

At Aspinwall we boarded one of the steamers for New York. We had a fine passage to New York, where we arrived without any undue delay.

We remained in New York over one night, when we proceeded on our journey home, where we arrived near the last of August, 1854, after an absence of a little more than five years and four months.

237

#### **ADDENDA. THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD.**

There are conflicting accounts as to who was the real discoverer of gold in California. Long before its actual existence was known the country was pictured as a marvelous Eldorado. As early as 1524 Cortes was given a dazzling description of a "wonderful island in the Pacific exceedingly rich in pearls and gold." Drake said in his journal, "the country seems to promise rich veins of gold." The native Indians claimed that gold existed among the streams, and in 1766 Jonathan Carver wrote with a spirit of prophecy that "probably in the future ages the land may be found to contain more riches in their bowels than those of Indostan." So account after account is given premising the existence of the precious mineral, until in 1847 Capt. Charles Bennett discovered gold near Sutter's mill, while there in partnership with James W. Marshall, who has since been credited as its discoverer. Bennett has a marble shaft standing in the Odd Fellows' cemetery at Salem, Ore., stating that he was the "Discoverer of Gold in California, and Fell in the Defense of His Country at Walla Walla," in 1855, fighting the Indians. Marshall has a more pretentious statue at Coloma, Cal., proclaiming him as the discoverer of the yellow nugget that started the stream of golden wealth from the Pacific slope, which was 238 to pour into the channels of trade in the United States until nearly two billion of dollars can be traced to the beginning of the hardy Argonauts who panned the first free gold. This story would not be complete without mention of the fact that another claimant

as discoverer of the precious mineral was a young woman by the name of Emma Bonney, who was spending the winter of 1845-6 in the vicinity of Sutter's port. As the United States had not then acquired a title to the country, her discovery was not heralded abroad and nothing came of it.

Until 1847 California had remained a part of Mexico, and was very sparsely settled. At that time, with the exception of a small settlement of Mormons established by Brigham Young in July, 1847, on the shore of Salt Lake, Utah, the country between the Missouri line, near Fort Independence, and the Sacramento valley, a distance of more than two thousand miles, was an almost unbroken wilderness, without civilized inhabitants, and spoken of as the "Great American Desert." As every schoolboy knows, or ought to know, Col. John C. Fremont was the real conqueror of California, and immediately the treaty was signed, which made it a part of the United States, the discovery of gold was proclaimed to the world, and instantaneously the invasion began.

Not alone to Fremont and the Gold Seekers belongs the entire credit of conquering California and transforming it into a wonderland. Before the doughty Pathfinder had found his way hither the sloop of war Portsmouth, built at the Kittery navy yard just opposite of the city, whose name the gallant vessel was to bear, in 1843. She sailed from Portsmouth December 9, 1844, to join the squadron of Commodore J. D. Sloat in the Pacific, where she arrived in season to participate in the Mexican War. On July 9, 1846, her crew under command of Lieut. J. S. Missroon, landed at Yerba Buena, as San Francisco was then known, and took possession of the town, raising for the first time, the American flag over California.

Not all of the Gold Seekers of '49 went overland, as Mr. Webster and his party did. Considerable debating was done at the time as to which was the best route; around Cape Horn with its storms and vicissitudes, to say nothing of the longer period of time required to make the passage; across the Isthmus of Panama, with its vexatious delays and constant dangers from tropical diseases; or by the Overland Trail, which seemed to promise a more speedy arrival at the destination, though that was fraught with great peril from hostile redmen and the hardships of crossing an unknown country.



While naturally of a different experience the story of those who went to the Land of Gold around Cape Horn is not less interesting than that of those who performed the tedious and terrible trip across the plains. Besides the perils of the deep to be met and overcome were the sufferings from scurvy and other complaints belonging to a life on the sea in those days. After all those who fared worse were the ones who tried the middle route to find themselves stranded in a tropical country unable to find ways and means of crossing the stretch of land lying between the oceans. Some tried the journey on foot, to perish by the way or reach the western shore, only to find 240 themselves no better off as far as continuing their course to the hoped-for Eldorado; many were finally obliged to seek passage on some homeward-bound ship, without having realized their dreams.

Whichever way they went, upon their arrival in the gold fields the mines proved a wonderful leveler of the classes of men. No distinction of rank was known there. Lawyers, doctors, ministers, men who wore kid gloves and tall hats in the East, were glad to dig in the trenches with the lowliest of laborers, all working for the same reward, the golden talisman of fortune. Unable for any reason, to succeed in the mines, some sought other ways of earning a living, if not a fortune, and so the schoolmaster sawed firewood, the erstwhile judge of an eastern court catered to a hungry crowd, while some business man performed the part of a cook, so wild were the pranks fate played upon these fortune-seekers. But if few came back rich, as wealth is reckoned, all helped to found in power and prestige the glory of the Pacific Slope.